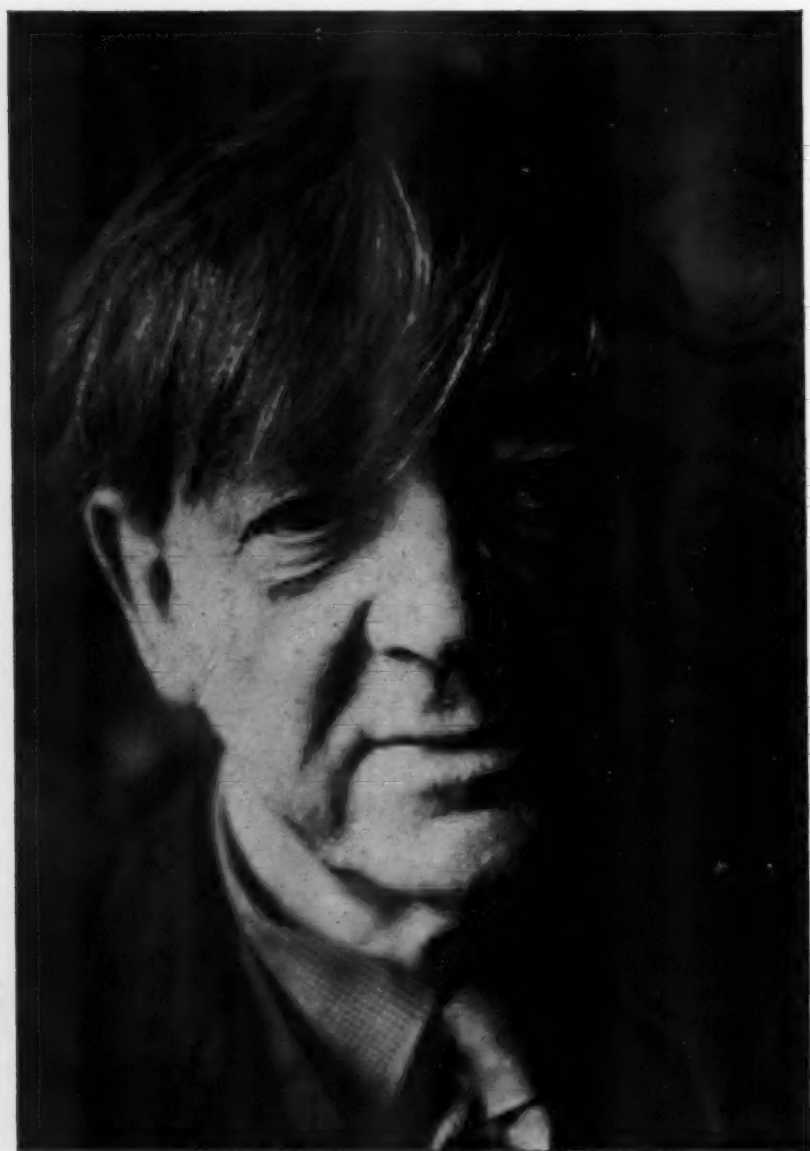


# AGENDA



DAVID JONES SPECIAL ISSUE





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## A NOTE TO THE ILLUSTRATIONS

In general it is, unfortunately, true that those of my visual works that I most prefer are impatient of reproduction. This is especially true of the various largish water-colours: flowers, seascapes, "still-lives" etc., where, if the colour, no matter how slight, is lost, the form is lost and the result in reproduction is virtually useless. This fact narrowed the choice of possible illustrations.

All that could be attempted was to choose from among a few things that in reproduction on a small scale might convey something of the "feel" of the original. Whether we have chosen wisely I do not know (I have not, at the time of writing this note, seen the actual plates) but I imagine "The Bear" made in 1903 when I was a child should emerge all right and there are few of my subsequent works which I prefer to that.

DAVID JONES

February the 17th, 1967.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1 Merlin appears in the Form of a Child to Arthur Sleeping. 1930. London. Pencil and body-colour.  $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8$ " *Cover*
- 2 David Jones. Photograph by Sally Soames *facing page* 1
- 3 Incised stone: the name Cymru on lengthways upper surface with cross on end surface and the name Elri (not seen in this photograph) on under surface. 1958-9. Harrow. Letters cut with engraving tool on grey-black stone from Lambay Island, Co. Dublin, Eire.  $1\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ " *facing page* 10
- 4 Knife with incised cross and the words Ste Paule on top surface of handle, zigzag pattern on side surface & O.P.N. (not seen in this photograph) on under surface. c. 1929. London. Cut with engraving tool in bone handle.  $\frac{1}{2} \times 3$ ". Steel blade  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " re-shaped by David Jones. *facing page* 10
- 5 The central figure, Tellus Mater, of panel on outer side of east wall, left of doorway, of the building known as the Ara Pacis Augustae which stood facing the Via Flaminia within the area called Campus Martius in Rome. It is now in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence. I especially wanted it to be

- reproduced here to illustrate *The Dream of Private Clitus* which centres round this most moving and noble piece of Roman academic sculpture. Late 1st. century B.C. Lunic (Carrara) marble. In writing *The Dream* I wrongly refer to the marble as "pentelic". facing page 11
- 6 Frontispiece to *In Parenthesis* 1936-7. Sidmouth. Pencil, ink and water-colour. 15"×11" facing page 16
- 7 Inscription: stanza IV of the 6th Century hymn *Vexilla regis prodeunt* (now unhappily deleted from our Good Friday Liturgy) with line 39 of the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Dream of the Rood* round the left, top and right margins, with the words *Agios Ischyros* from the Improperia of the Good Friday Liturgy at the bottom margin. 1956. Harrow. Opaque water-colour of various colours on white under-painting on paper. Very approximately 16"×20" facing page 17
- 8 Tir y Blaenau. 1925. Wales. Water-colour and chalk. 22"×16" facing page 32
- 9 The Bear. 1903. Kent. Pencil. 18"×22" facing page 33
- 10 Inscription (beginning Cloelia Cornelia) in Latin, Welsh and English. 1959. Harrow. Opaque water-colour black and yellow on white background. 22½"×15½". Photograph by Paul Laib. facing page 48
- 11 Tywysog Cariad. c. 1929. London. Pencil with some water-colour. Unfinished study for proposed work illustrating the Oblation and Immolation of the Cross and of the Altar in a Welsh hill-setting. c. 11"×9". Photograph by Raymond Moore. facing page 49
- 12 Panthers in Regents Park Zoo. 1931. London. Pencil and water-colour. 12½"×21". facing page 64
- 13 Morlan. 1931 or '32. Pembrokeshire. Entirely water-colour. c. 22"×19" facing page 65
- 14 Door of Tabernacle for Altar at Capel - y - ffin. Chi - Rho monogram with Lamb and the Introit for Corpus Xti round margin. 1925. Wales. Oil paint on metal (iron). The dark patches are rust-marks due to unavoidable condensation. c. 14"×11" facing page 80

- 15 The Old Animal from Tibet in Regents Park Zoo. 1930.  
London. Water-colour and pencil.  $15\frac{1}{2}" \times 18\frac{1}{2}"$  *facing page 81*
- 16 Detail of The Annunciation in a Welsh hill-setting.  
*facing page 97*
- 17 Y Cyfarchiad i Fair. The Annunciation in a Welsh hill-setting and employing motifs from Welsh mythology. c. 1963-4. Harrow. Pencil with some water-colour. c.  $30" \times 22"$ .  
Photograph by Raymond Moore. *facing page 98*
- 18 Inscription: part of the Creed and part of the Secret for the Midnight Mass of the Nativity. c. 1953. Harrow. Opaque water-colour black and red on Chinese White under painting on paper.  $15\frac{1}{4}" \times 22\frac{1}{4}"$  *facing page 112*
- 19 The Queen's Dish. 1932. Buckinghamshire. Entirely water-colour.  $22" \times 30"$ . *facing page 113*
- 20 'He Frees the Waters'. 1931. Unfinished wood-engraving.  $6" \times 9\frac{1}{2}"$ .  
*facing page 128*
- 21 Human Being. 1931. Oil on Canvas.  $29\frac{1}{2}" \times 23\frac{3}{8}"$ .  
*facing page 129*

#### A NOTE BY THE EDITOR

At a time when there seems danger that the world is losing its memory, and few poets possess the visionary imagination which lies at the root of all the permanent poetry of Europe, I think it is fitting that these three issues of *Agenda* should be devoted to different aspects of the work of David Jones. His poetry and his painting are both filled with a numinous material detail; they contain a particular beauty which, while gathering strength from many various sources, holds its own haecceity that has a certain kinship to *Sir Gawain and the Grene Knight*. He has drawn from "the dark backward and abysm of time" radiant layers of past experience into a living cosmos — as Ezra Pound has written:

There *is* the subtler music, the clear light  
Where time burns back about th' eternal embers.

*A, a, a, DOMINE DEUS*

I said, Ah! what shall I write?  
I enquired up and down.  
    (He's tricked me before  
with his manifold lurking-places.)  
I looked for His symbol at the door.  
I have looked for a long while  
    at the textures and contours.  
I have run a hand over the trivial intersections.  
I have journeyed among the dead forms  
causation projects from pillar to pylon.  
I have tired the eyes of the mind  
    regarding the colours and lights.  
I have felt for His Wounds  
    in nozzles and containers.  
I have wondered for the automatic devices.  
I have tested the inane patterns  
    without prejudice.  
I have been on my guard  
    not to condemn the unfamiliar.  
For it is easy to miss Him  
    at the turn of a civilisation.  
I have watched the wheels go round in case  
I might see the living creatures like the appearance of lamps, in case I might see the Living God projected from the Machine. I have said to the perfected steel, be my sister and for the glassy towers I thought I felt some beginnings of His creature, but *A, a, a, Domine Deus*, my hands found the glazed work unrefined and the terrible crystal a stage-paste . . . *Eia, Domine Deus.*

DAVID JONES  
c. 1938 and 1966.

## THE WALL

We don't know the ins and outs  
    how should we? how could we?  
It's not for the likes of you and me to cogitate high policy or  
to guess the inscrutable economy of the pontifex  
    from the circuit of the agger  
    from the traverse of the wall.  
But you see a thing or two  
    in our walk of life  
    walking the compass of the vallum  
walking for twenty years of nights  
    round and round and back & fro  
on the walls that contain the world.

You see a thing or two, you think a thing or two, in our walk  
of life, walking for twenty years, by day, by night, doing the  
rounds on the walls that maintain the world

    on the hard tread of the silex  
    on the heavy tread of the mound  
up in the traversed out-work, stepping it at the alert, down on  
the *via quintana* stepping it double-quick by numbers to break  
y'r tiro-heart...

    dug in wrong side the *limes*  
or walled in back at depot?

                                    it's evens, more or less  
as far as jumping to it goes.

But what about the Omphalos  
there's the place for the proud walkers  
    where the terminal gate  
    arcs for the sections in column  
stepping their extra fancy step  
    behind the swag and spolia  
o' the universal world

...out from The Camp  
in through the dexter arch of double-wayed Carmenta  
by where Aventine flanks The Circus

(from Arx the birds deploy?)

to where the totem mother  
imported  
Ionian  
of bronze

brighs Capitoline for ever

(from the Faunine slope  
of creviced Palatine does the grey wraith erect her throat to  
welcome the lupine gens?)

Erect, crested with the open fist that turns the evil spell,  
lifting the flat palm that disciplines the world, the signa lift  
in disciplined acknowledgement, the eagles stand erect for Ilia

O Roma

O Ilia

Io Triumphe, Io, Io...

the shopkeepers presume to make

the lupine cry their own

the magnates of the Boarium  
leave their nice manipulations. You may call the day ferial,  
rub shoulders with the plebs. All should turn out to see how  
those appointed to die take the Roman medicine. They crane  
their civvy necks half out their civvy suits to bait the maimed  
king in his tintured vesture, the dying *tegnos* of the wasted  
*landa* well webbed in our marbled parlour, bitched and be-  
wildered and far from his dappled patria far side the misted  
Fretum

You can think a thing or two

on *that* parade:

Do the celestial forechoosings  
and the hard journeyings

come to this?

Did the empyreal fires

hallow the chosen womb

to tabernacle founders of  
emporia?

Were the august conjoinings

was the troia'd wandering  
achieved





did the sacred equation square the mundane site  
was truth with fact conjoined

blossom the stone lintels      did the earth-mother  
did the bright share      did *urvus* become *urbs*

to the star plan      turn the dun clod  
per *scamna et strigas*      did they parcel out

that we should sprawl      the *civitas* of God  
from Septimontium  
a megalopolis that wills death?

Does the pontifex, do our lifted trumpets, speak to the city and  
the world to call the tribes to Saturnalia to set misrule in the  
curule chair, to bind the rejected fillet on the King of the Bean?

It's hard to trapes these things

from the circuit of the agger  
from the traverse of the wall

wanting the guard-house fug      waiting for the middle watch to pass  
where the companions nod  
where the sooted billikin

brews the night broth

so cold it is, so numb the intelligence,  
so chancy the intuition, so alert the apprehension for us who  
walk in darkness, in the shadow of the *onager*, in the shadow of  
the labyrinth of the wall, of the world, of the robber walls of  
the world city, trapesing the macrocosmic night.

Or, trapesing the night within, walking the inner labyrinth  
where also the night is, under the tortoise of the skull, for every  
man walking?

Under the legionary's iron knob, under the tribune's field  
crest, under the very distinguished gilt *cassis* of the Legatus  
himself?

We don't know the ins and outs  
how can we? how shall we?

What did our mothers tell us? What did their mothers tell them? What the earth-mother told to them? But what did the queen of heaven tell *her*?

What was it happened by the fire-flame eating the griddle-cake...or by the white porch where our sister sang the Sabine dirge.

...they used to say we marched for Dea Roma behind the wolf sign to eat up the world, they used to say we marched for the Strider, the common father of the Roman people, the father of all in our walk of life, by whose very name you're called...

but now they say the Quirinal Mars turns out to be no god of war but of armed peace. Now they say we march for kind Irene, who crooks her rounded elbow for little Plutus, the gold-getter, and they say that sacred brat has a future...

now all can face the dying god  
the dying Gaul  
without regret.

But you and me, comrade, the Darlings of Ares, who've helped a lot of Gauls and gods to die, we shall continue to march and to bear in our bodies the marks of the Marcher—by whatever name they call him...

we shall continue to march  
round and round the cornucopia:

that's the new fatigue.

DAVID JONES

c. 1952, but using, in part,  
some fragments written c.  
1940.





Once,  
one o  
those  
were a  
where  
roster,  
was I  
I take  
a siste  
All rig  
Olymp

I'm fr

Now,  
our A  
Twins

Well,  
guard  
woods  
And v  
ed of  
woods  
straig  
betwe  
round  
and t  
toward  
direct  
of ea

And  
dying  
West  
eveni  
make

Now  
arch.

## THE DREAM OF PRIVATE CLITUS

Once, on the Limes Germanicus, I dreamed: after a rear-guard, one of many. Extricating ourselves we were from the gods of those parts, no unusual thing. And, in my dream, the phantoms were all big bodied and bigly proportioned that leaned over me where I lay in a bivvy, next Lugo. '59 Lugo on our manipular roster, so Lugo he was, though his full, outlandish, Celtic nomen was Lugobelinos, a mouthful, worse than yours, Oenomaus. I take it you was wafted in from Arcady—gotta nymph for a sister?

All right! from Hollow Elis then, better still, a real, live, sprinting Olympian.

I'm from the Urbs—though reared a countryman.

Now, Celt or no, my Lugo fancied his weight as an inmate of our Asylum and reckoned himself as Ilian and as Urban as the Twins. May the blessed Manes rest him—a stray got him.

Well, there we were bivouacked, after five days in this rear-guard, and ours was the sinister flank, with the gods of those woods pressing in on us in among the trees of those woods. And where we lay it was as if we lay in a kind of peristyle, builded of the tall trees, deep within the shadowy labyrinth of those woods. Long corridors of arches stretched all ways. Smooth, straight boles those trees had, and no low growth with the sword between each as it were like a pavement. And it was as if the rounded arches of our basilicas were suddenly to bestir themselves and the genius of each column to exert itself and reach across toward the numen of the column opposite. For all is thrusting and directional in the labyrinth of those parts and each swaying limb of each tree struggles for the mastery, high up.

And looking up at those gusty vaults of the faded green of a dying year, with chinks of a now darkening blue, flecked from Westward with the caelian purple—for 'twas near toward the evening bugle—the mingle of their contesting boughs seemed to make pointed arches.

Now that's a thing you don't see in stone, Oenomaus, a pointed arch. And I don't suppose you ever will.

But it's a fine thing is a pointed arch made of the striving branches of the living wood.

And homing eagles winged above those windy arches and this, some of them reckoned, an auspicious sign and Lugo said: See, the Roman bird. But I said: Lugo, don't talk wet. Don't talk like a civvy who's arranged another war. And fell asleep.

And as I slept, I dreamed, and in my dream—well, it's small marvel I dreamed of large bodies, considering the farish bulk and long reach of the Chauci and the Langobardi and such like tow-haired great bastards. As milk-necked they are and as golden locked as any meretrix that brights a shady colonnade between Viminal and Esquiline, back home.

These big, fair-hued square-heads had hung on our exposed flank for five days. And when I say five days I mean the *last* five days of that delaying action. Five days, five weeks, why, five months we'd been up in those parts, a good five months we'd been in those parts before we got into this particular jamb.

So there I lay, and there I dreamed and in my dream, as I dreamed of the large limbs it seemed in my dream as if I no longer lay with Lugo in our bivvy under the pointed arches but now in my dream, with him and all fast sleeping—for in a sleep-dream you can dream of man sleeping and of a man waking, there's no end to the recessions, nor to the superimpositions neither, in these dreams. Anyway, in my dream-making we *now* lay in Mars Field, being carried thither by virtue of the genius of the dream, that's where we lay—outside the Ara Pacis in Mars Field, on the east side, flush under the outer wall of the east vestibule, as you come in from the Flaminian Road. There we lay in my dream under the white pentelic frieze, him now sleeping and I waking and the moon full on the gradual limbs of the marble goddess and on the chiselled folds of her marble linea and on the buoyant zephyrs that attend her, shadowy on the patient animals, clear on the exertive twins. It's to the life! Ever *seen* the Ara Pacis mate? When you come in, by the Flaminian Gate? It's a fine job of work, all that relief-work between the pilasters, but specially that left hand one of the Terra Mater, specially under the full moon of the Ides of April when they sacrifice, on her behalf, under her moon, the creatures of kine as are womb-burdened at that time, and such was the precise time in my dream-calendar—for there's no end to the precision and exactitude of these dream-data. So, in my dream, it was the round moon of the Fordicidia, and none other, as shone bright on the worked pentelic.

You get a good relief in the moon of that type of work, it's a bit of a marvel how they contrive that sort of work and that's a job you'd be a fine duffer at, Oenomaus, mason-work. But that was as fine a work as I've seen in the moon and that's a thing I should never have seen in the ordinary run of things, but in these dreams the fates arrange no end of comings together. Heavy bodies sail the air with the greatest of ease in these dreams, there's no end to the unions these sleep-dreams can lend to things separate enough in wake-a-day.

And so it was that I, Private Clitus, in the first year of my service, sleeping bivouacked next my butt—raw troops we were from the last draft—in our flank-guard post, detached from best part of our unit, fed up and far from sweetest home, a hundred miliaria beyond the walls of the world — a hundred and more we were from our transports in the estuary: we were based up there on Lugdunum at the river mouth, well round beyond the Gaulish Strait, half way to Thule—poor bleedin' orphans of the Mother of Cities up there the Teutoburg Wood, at the fall of the year, was privileged to be shown by the genius of sleep, the gestatrix of each of us, depicted in marble, under her own moon on her own special day at the gate of the city in the lent of the year.

This lune-light of my dream-night seemed to shine on the marble zephyrs depicted there, drifting a-swan-back and on dolphin in signification of the twin waters of the world, both marine and up stream, narrow and wide, all the water-weirs and the netted seas that Jove's Augustus fenced, for our perpetual health, shined also on the leaning ears of the marble wheat-stalks and on the heaped fruits, on the peaceful ox, on the ewe sheep, browsing, and on all the fertile signification of the sculpture-work and on her, centrally seated with her marble *palla* well back from the marbles of her brow to show her marbled tresses, and the twin fruit of her, to clamber her calm lap, like the proper mother of us all, from whose containing deeps we come, to whose embrace we turn...

Twice as large and twice as natural she seemed under this moon—have you ever noticed that Oenomaus? These moons always make things twice as large and so it was with my dream-moon, all was as large again. Why, that outer wall at the precincts has no more than eighteen foot drop from the cornice, I'll be bound, but in my moon it seemed a good thirty foot looking up from our bivvy and the sculptured forms proportionately big and the shadows very deep and the brighted contours rounded and firm.

It was a fine sight to see, and, what's more, and now we're coming to it, out from the still marble, larger yet in her gradual appearing under the moon, she herself leaned in my dream and lightly her marble boys seemed yet suspended in the marble air, her seeming movement, for I saw no motion, seemed not to disarrange the placid forms depicted there, and that's a poser for waking-thoughts, but there's no end to the possibilities of these dreams. So at least she did *appear* to lean, detached as it were from the reliefwork and more bodily perceived, yet still in her static element of stone nor yet disturbing the balance of the masonry. And so she herself gravely inclined herself and seemed to reach her sizable marble limbs toward me and my mate in our bivvy, him sleeping and I waking, and the large uncertain phantoms of my dream that leaned over me up there in the Teutoburg became concrete in the proportioned limbs of Tellus Our Mother, leaning living from the east wall below the cornice and all the world seemed at peace deep within the folds of her stola as she leaned over our bivvy and all but touched our bivvy-sheets with her strong marble fingers.

And now, in my dream-thinking and by virtue of the vision or by the chancy ebb and flood of those dream tides that Oceanus charts, it seemed that me and Lugo were caught up into that peace, whether in a marble body I cannot tell, if as Dioscuri of flesh and blood, I can't say—the genius of the dream knows—but such ones we seemed to be as merited her large embrace for keeping, so it seemed to my dream-thinking, the Middle Watch at the traverse of the wall. It seemed that surely now for ever me and my battle-mate would be for ever in the lap of Tellus, high on the wall, within the gate, ageless emeriti, as a perpetual signification of Roma and her sons. And then we should watch the tyros sweat by each day to exercise, up there at Mars Camp, and—what discloses the nasty twist in the nature of us—I laughed right out at that, a last dream laugh.

And now (in my dream-now that is), from his side our gestatorial marble, Lugo cried out a name: Modron! he cries, and then,— but very low-voiced though: Porth-Annwfyn. Some numinous, arcane agnomen, but which to my dream-cognition was lucid as moonshine and did plainly signify: Gate of Elysium.

Now I knew no word of Lugo's lingo, and it was, after all, my dream, not his. Well, Oenomaus, what do you make of that one? But I'll tell you further: when they got him I was next by him in the traverse—and that was no dream—and he cried loud the same cult-name, but not the last bit, for he was done before he could utter it.



So, as I figure it, his Modron and our Matrona are one, and his *porth* that shadowy portal beyond which Proserpine abides, from fall till crocus-time.

But now at my sleep change, 'at the third transforming of the vision, at the final showing of the genius of the dream, at the cycle's end—the Horn Gate all but ajar—the chiselled folds of her stola that had seemed so white in the moon, were now, in the twinkling of an eye, become the coarse-wave folds rucked at the lap of just such an apron as the women use as part of the gear of their trade in the parts where I was born. And now the browsing marble sheep next the marble ox, was now, at the turn of my dream, the identical ewe-lamb they took and trussed up for the March Lucina Feast, one wet, windy morning when I was so high.

It was a great day always in our part of the country, was the Juno feast, but on this particular keen morning of her feast, on the First of the ten calends of the Romulean year, I was playing Greeks and Trojans with my brother, behind our byre, well under the pent, you know:

Mars wind, cold rain  
bairns and old-bones  
best within,

when they came to take her away, and I bellowed for that lanib—I well remember that—and so I *seemed* to bellow now, like a bull, at my dream-ending. But my dream-bellowing turned out to be the bawling of old Brasso, calling out the names and numbers for the Middle Watch. There's no end to the metamorphoses of these dreams.

Brasso? Brasso Olenius of No. 1 Cohort? The Primus Pilus Prior?

Why, yes, of course, who else but Brasso? Who else should shake a man from such a dream? Of course he was up there with us, he's always been with us, he always will be with us, while there's any us to make memento of. Whether y're a half-section in a foreward cubby-hole or half a cohort back in legion-reserve, there's always a Brasso to shout the odds, a fact-man to knock sideways and fragmentate these dreamed unities and blessed conjugations, why certainly old Brasso was up there—and, he was up the ladder, too,—the higher the casualties, the higher the climber. There he was, in the *Primi Ordines* over-night, and his main leg up was the packet we got in that show and that's why,

after that show, we called him Brasso Germanicus, and then we called him Brasso for short and that's why he's called Brasso to this day. There's a bit of domestic reg'mental history for you and you should have known that much with your one year of service, come the Kalends of Maius, Oenomaus.

Why, I reckon Brasso can persuade himself he was a tyro under the Divine Julius. For these fact-men, Oenomaus, have their hallucinations, don't forget that, indeed their delusions would beat a garret poet—only there's calculation in the very dreams of a Brasso.

Some say he was born shouting the odds, in full parade kit, with a pacing-stick under his cherubic little arm, in the year that Marius reorganized the maniples and put the whole works on a proper, professional, cohort footing.

There *are* those that say  
his mother laboured with him  
in Anno Urbis Conditae  
the year that measures  
all the years.

They say that she  
was ventricled of bronze  
had ubera of iron  
and that at each vigilia's term  
she gave him of her lupine nectar  
and by numbers.  
And that a tart-mouthed salpinx  
brayed unblown of mortal lips  
its fierce Etrurian taratantara  
at those routine hours

precisely.

And that, they say, is why  
in actual, concrete  
and present reality  
we do, in fact

(at those four routine hours precisely)  
relieve the guard.

To the beautiful cacophany of  
those lancer-whiskered bloody bucinators  
when they start up on their convoking brass.

If his lovely face is purple it's to match the Legate's plume—and that's not done on a issue tot—that's the pigmentation of centuries. He's on the permanent establishment, if ever a climber was.



PA·GEON·δ·h·AE·E·δ·p·AET·  
ARBOR·DECORA·  
ET·FVL·GIDA·  
ORNATA·REGIS·  
PVR·PVR·A·ELECTA·  
DIGNO·STIPITE·  
TAM·SANC·TA·  
MEMBRA·TANGERE·  
·AGIOS·ΙΣΧΥΡΟΣ·

But, when the Second Pleiad fails her light and Flora becomes  
exfoliate and the Urbs falls, you'll know that Brasso must have  
fallen previous—first at the peripheries of us, then at the very  
node:

That'd be a difficult thing to dream, Oenomaus:

Dea Roma, Flora Dea

meretrix or world-nutricula

without Brasso.

There are some things

that can't be managed

even in these dreams.

DAVID JONES

c. 1960, but based, in part,  
on a longer work begun c.  
1940.

*Note:* "The Dream of Private Clitus" is a fragment of a work. The  
setting is in some sort of a guard-post on the wall of Roman Jerusalem  
at the time of the Passion.

Clitus is a soldier of long service, from the district of Roman itself.

His companion Oenomanus is a young soldier, not long recruited from  
Greece, from that part once called Elis, where the Olympia was.

The fragment consists entirely of a monologue by Clitus, except for  
ten words of an interrogatory nature.

Clitus is describing to his new companion a dream he had once had  
years before as a young legionary serving in a campaign in Germany.  
His mate at that time being a Celt, soon killed in action, called Lugo  
belinos.

The main motif of the fragment derives from that superb marble relief  
carving of Tellus Mater illustrated opposite the beginning of the poem  
which formed one of the two panels (the other was the goddess Roma)  
on the east front of the Ara Pacis Augustae facing the Flaminian Way  
leading north from Rome; it was built on the Campus Martius, conse-  
crated in the year B.C. 14, but dedicated in B.C. 9 when Augustus returned  
from campaigns in Spain and Gaul and was thought of as symbolising  
the Augustan "pacification of the world" (rather like the Palace of Peace  
at Geneva in our time).

I purposely make a Roman, a Celt and a Greek serving in the same  
Roman unit to symbolise the heterogeneous nature of the Empire. I do  
not know whether in fact this could have occurred at that date, probably  
not. I chose the name Clitus because *to me* it felt Roman, actually it is  
a Greek name, I may also have got it muddled up in my mind with Cletus  
whose name one hears each time one goes to a Mass of the Roman Rite,  
though that name too is I believe Greek. But I do not feel inclined to  
alter it now. I chose Oenomaus because it was the name of a king of Elis,  
son of the god Ares, in Greek Mythology and it did in fact remain a  
name among Greeks. I chose Lugobelinos for the Celt because it is the  
original Celtic form of the Welsh name Llywelyn, just as Cunobelinos  
was the actual name of Shakespeare's "radiant Cymbeline" in Welsh  
now Cynfelyn.

See Page 128 for a rendering of this poem into French by Louis Bonnerot.

## THE TUTELAR OF THE PLACE

She that loves place, time, demarcation, hearth, kin, enclosure, site, differentiated cult, though she is but one mother of us all: one earth brings us all forth, one womb receives us all, yet to each she is other, named of some name other...

...other sons,  
beyond hill, over strath, or never so neighbouring by nigh field or near crannog up stream. What co-tidal line can plot if nigrin or flaxhead marching their wattles be cognate or german of common totem?

Tellus of the myriad names answers to but one name: From this tump she answers Jac o' the Tump only if he call Great-Jill-of-the-tump-that-bare-me, not if he cry by some new fangle moder of far gentes over the flud, fer-goddes name from anaphora of far folk wont woo her; she's a rare one for locality. Or, gently she bends her head from far-height when tongue-strings chime the name she whispered on known-site, as between sister and brother at the time of beginnings... when the wrapped bands are cast and the worst mewling is over, after the weaning and before the august initiations, in the years of becoming.

When she and he 'twixt door-stone and fire-stane prefigure and puppet on narrow floor-stone the world-masque on wide world-floor.

When she attentively changes her doll-shift, lets pretend with solemnity as rocking the womb-gift.

When he chivvies house-pet with his toy *hasta*, makes believe the cat o' the wold falls to the pitiless bronze.

Man-travail and woman-war here we see enacted are.

When she and he beside the settle, he and she between the trestle-struts, mime the bitter dance to come. Cheek by chin at the childer-crock where the quick tears drop and the quick laughter dries the tears, within the rim of the shared curd-cup each fore-reads the world-storm. Till the spoil-sport gammers sigh:

Now come on now little children, come on now it's past the hour. Sun's to roost, brood's in pent, dusk-star tops mound, lupa sniffs the lode-damps for stragglers late to byre.

Come now it's time to come now for tarry awhile and slow  
cot's best for yeanelings  
crib's best for babes

here's a rush to light you to bed  
here's a fleece to cover your head  
against the world-storm

brother by sister

under one *brethyn*

kith of the kin warmed at the one hearth-flame  
(of the seed of far-gaffer? fair gammer's wer-gifts?)  
cribbed in garth that the garth-Jill wards.

Though she inclines with attention from far fair-height outside all boundaries, beyond the known and kindly nomenclatures, where all names are one name, where all stones of demarcation dance and interchange, troia the skipping mountains, nod recognitions.

As when on known-site ritual frolics keep bucolic interval at eves and divisions when they mark the inflexions of the year and conjugate with trope and turn the seasons' syntax, with beating feet, with wands and pentagons to spell out the Trisagion.

Who laud and magnify with made, mutable and beggarly elements the unmade immutable begettings and precessions of fair-height, with halting sequences and unresolved rhythms, searchingly, with what's to hand, under the inconstant lights that hover world-flats, that bright by fit and start the tangle of world-wood, rifting the dark drifts for the wanderers that wind the world-meander, who seek hidden grammar to give back anathema its first benignity.

Gathering all things in, twining each bruised stem to the swaying trellis of the dance, the dance about the sawn lode-stake on the hill where the hidden stillness is at the core of struggle, the dance around the green lode-tree on far fair-height where the secret guerdons hang and the bright prizes nod, where sits the queen *im Rosenhage* eating the honey-cake, where the king sits, counting-out his man-geld, rhyming the audits of all the world-holdings.

Where the marauder leaps the wall and the wall dances to the marauder's leaping, where the plunging wolf-spear and the wolf's pierced diaphragm sing the same song...

Yet, when she stoops to hear you children cry  
from the scattered and single habitations  
or from the nucleated holdings



from tower'd *castra*  
paved *civitas*  
treble-ramped *caer*  
or wattled *tref*

stockaded *gorod* or  
trenched *burh*

from which ever child-crib within whatever enclosure  
demarked by a dynast or staked by consent  
wherever in which of the wide world-ridings

you must not call her but by that name  
which accords to the morphology of that place.

Now pray now little children pray for us all now, pray our  
gammer's prayer according to our *disciplina* given to us  
within our labyrinth on our dark mountain.

Say now little children:

Sweet Jill of our hill hear us  
bring slow bones safe at the lode-ford  
keep lupa's bite without our wattles  
make her bark keep children good  
save us all from dux of far folk  
save us from the men who plan.

Now sleep on, little children, sleep on now, while I tell  
out the greater suffrages, not yet for young heads to  
understand:

Queen of the differentiated sites, administratrix of the  
demarcations, let our cry come unto you.

In all times of imperium save us  
when the *mercatores* come save us

from the guile of the *negotiatores* save us  
from the *missi*, from the agents

who think no shame  
by inquest to audit what is shameful to tell  
deliver us.

When they check their capitularies in their curias  
confuse their reckonings.

When they narrowly assess the *trefydd*

by hide and rod  
by *pentan* and pent

by impost and fee on beast-head

and roof-tree  
and number the souls of men

notch their tallies false  
disorder what they have collated.



When they proscribe the diverse uses and impose the  
rootless uniformities, pray for us.

When they sit in *Consilium*  
to liquidate the holy diversities

mother of particular perfections

queen of otherness

mistress of asymmetry

patroness of things counter, parti, pied, several

protectress of things known and handled

help of things familiar and small

wardress of the secret crevices

of things wrapped and hidden

mediatrix of all the deposits

margravine of the troia

empress of the labyrinth

receive our prayers.

When they escheat to the Ram

in the Ram's curia

the seisin where the naiad sings

above where the forked rod bends

or where the dark outcrop

tells on the hidden seam

pray for the green valley.

When they come with writs of oyer and terminer

to hear the false and

determine the evil

according to the advices of the Ram's magnates who serve

the Ram's wife, who write in the Ram's book of Death.

In the bland megalopolitan light

where no shadow is by day or by night

be our shadow.

Remember the mound-kin, the kith of the *tarren* gone from

this mountain because of the exorbitance of the Ram...

remember them in the rectangular tenements, in the houses

of the engines that fabricate the ingenuities of the Ram...

Mother of Flowers save them then where no flower blows.

Though they shall not come again

because of the requirements of the Ram with respect to the

world plan, remember them where the dead forms multiply,

where no stamen leans, where the carried pollen falls to the

adamant surfaces, where is no crevice.

In all times of *Gleichschaltung*, in the days of the central  
economies, set up the hedges of illusion round some remnant  
of us, twine the wattles of mist, white-web a Gwydion-hedge

like fog on the *bryniau*  
 against the commissioners  
 and assessors bearing the writs of the Ram to square the  
 world-floor and number the tribes and write down the secret  
 things and take away the diversities by which we are, by  
 which we call on your name, sweet Jill of the demarcations  
 arc of differences  
 tower of individuation  
 queen of the minivers

laughing in the mantle of variety  
 belle of the mound

for Jac o'the mound  
 our belle and donnabelle

on all the world-mountain.  
 In the December of our culture ward somewhere the secret  
 seed, under the mountain, under and between, between the  
 grids of the Ram's survey when he squares the world-circle.  
 Sweet Mair devise a mazy-guard  
 in and out and round about  
 double-dance defences  
 countermure and echelon meanders round  
 the holy mound

fence within the fence  
 pile the dun ash for the bright seed  
 (within the curtained wood the canister  
 within the canister the budding rod)  
 troia in depth the shifting wattles of illusion for the ancilia  
 for the palladia for the kept memorials, because of the com-  
 missioners of the Ram and the Ram's decree concerning the  
 utility of the hidden things.

When the technicians manipulate the dead limbs of our culture  
 as though it yet had life, have mercy on us. Open unto  
 us, let us enter a second time within your stola-folds in those  
 days—ventricle and refuge both, *hendref* for world-winter,  
 asylum from world-storm. Womb of the Lamb the spoiler of  
 the Ram.

DAVID JONES

c. 1960 incorporating pass-  
 ages written earlier.

Mr. Vernon Watkins has provided a glossary of certain Welsh words  
 in this poem:

<i>brethyn</i>	cloth	<i>tarren</i>	tump, knoll
<i>bryniau</i>	hills	<i>tref</i>	hamlet
<i>caer</i>	fort, castle, city	<i>trefydd</i>	hamlets
<i>hendref</i>	ancestral dwelling, winter quarters	<i>troia</i>	meander, from <i>troi</i> , to turn, and Troea, Troy.
<i>pentan</i>	hob, fire-stone		

## THE HUNT

...and the hundreds and twenties  
of horsed *palatini*

(to each *comitatus*

one Penteulu)

that closely hedge  
with a wattle of weapons

the firsts among equals

from the wattled *palasau*

the torqued *arglwyddi*

of calamitous jealousy<sup>1</sup>

(if there were riders from the Faithful Fetter-locked War-Band there were riders also from the Three Faithless War-Bands: the riders who receive the shaft-shock

in place of their radiant lords

the riders who slip the column

whose lords alone

receive the shafts)<sup>2</sup>

when the men of proud spirit and the men of mean spirit, the named and the unnamed of the Island and the name-bearing steeds of the Island and the dogs of the Island and the silent lords and the lords of loud mouth, the leaders of familiar visage from the dear known-sites and the adjuvant stranger lords with aid for the hog-hunt from over the Sleeve<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The words *palatini*, Penteulu, *arglwyddi*, and jealousy all rhyme. The word *palasau* (palaces) is pronounced approximately pal-ass-eye, accent on the middle syllable.

The Penteulu was the term used for the Captain of the Guard of the horse-troop which constituted the *comitatus* of a Welsh ruler. Pronounce pen-tye-lee, accent on the middle syllable.

*Arglwyddi* (lords) pronounce approximately arr-gloo-with-ee—stress accent on penultimate syllable. Perhaps arg-glwith-ee conveys it better

<sup>2</sup> This passage in brackets refers to certain incidents and persons (such as Gronw the Radiant) mentioned in the Triads of the Three Faithful War-Bands and the Three Unfaithful War-Bands of the Island of Britain.

<sup>3</sup> In the Culhwch narrative mention is made of aid coming from across the Channel, and at Cardigan the hog kills *gwilenhin brenin freinc*, Gwilenhin, King of France.

and the wand-bearing lords that are kin to Fferyllt<sup>1</sup> (who learned from the Sibyl the Change Date and the Turn of Time) the lords who ride after deep consideration and the lords whose inveterate habit is to ride the riders who ride from interior compulsion and the riders who fear the narrow glances of the kindred.

Those who would stay for the dung-bailiff's daughter and those who would ride though the shining *matres* three by three sought to stay them.<sup>2</sup>

The riders who would mount though the green wound unstitched and those who would leave their mounts in stall if the bite of a gadfly could excuse them.

The innate Combrogues,<sup>3</sup> by father by mother without mixed without brok'n without mean descent, all the lords from among the co-equals and the quasi-free of limited privilege, whose insult price is unequal but whose limb-price is equal for all the disproportion as to comeliness and power because the dignity belonging to the white limbs and innate in the shining members, annuls inequality of status and disallows distinctions of appearance.<sup>4</sup>

When the free and the bond and the mountain mares and the fettled horses and the four-penny curs and the hounds of status in the wide, jewelled collars

<sup>1</sup> Fferyllt or Fferyll is the Welsh form of the name Vergil. Pronounce approximately, fair-rillt. Owing to the medieval association of Vergil with prophetic and magical powers, any alchemist was called *fferyllt* and later the word became used of any chemist.

<sup>2</sup> The term *maer biswail*, 'dung bailiff', was used of the overseer of the villeins who worked on the court farmlands, thus making the jocular distinction between him and the Maer (from Lat. *major*) of the province, an important executive official.

The "shining *matres*, three by three" refers to a possible connection between the female cult-figures sculptured in groups of three of Romano-Celtic Antiquity, called *Deae Matres* and the term *Y Mamau*, The Mothers, used of the fairies in some parts of Wales.

<sup>3</sup> Combrogues (pronounce com-bro-gees, accent on middle syllable), 'men of the same *patria*' from which word, Cymry, the Welsh people, derives. Compare Allobroges a people of Savoy mentioned by Classical writers and glossed as meaning 'men of a different *patria*'.

<sup>4</sup> This passage refers to various complex distinctions listed in the code known as 'The Laws of Hywel Dda'.

when all the shining Arya<sup>1</sup> rode  
 with the diademed leader  
     who directs the toil  
     whose face is furrowed  
 with the weight of the enterprise  
     the lord of the conspicuous scars whose visage is fouled  
 with the hog-spittle whose cheeks are fretted with the grime of  
 the hunt-toil:  
     if his forehead is radiant  
 like the smooth hill in the lateral light  
     it is corrugated  
 like the defences of the hill  
     because of his care for the land  
 and for the men of the land.  
 If his eyes are narrowed for the stress of the hunt  
 and because of the hog they are moist for the ruin and  
 for love of the recumbant bodies that strew the ruin.  
 If his embroidered habit is clearly from a palace wardrobe  
 it is mired and rent and his bruised limbs gleam from between  
 the rents, by reason of the excessive fury of his riding when he  
 rode the close thicket as though it were an open launde  
     (indeed, was it he riding the forest-ride  
 or was the tangled forest riding?)  
 for the thorns and flowers of the forest and the bright elm-  
 shoots and the twisted tanglewood of stamen and stem clung  
 and meshed him and starred him with variety  
 and the green tendrils gartered him and briary-loops galloon  
 him with splinter-spike and broken blossom twining his royal  
 needlework  
     and ruby petal-points counter  
 the countless points of his wounds

<sup>1</sup> The word Arya means the nobles or high-men, and has nothing  
 whatever to do with race. Among the Sumerians, Chinese, Mongols  
 and the Hamitic tribes of Africa, wherever there was a warrior-culture  
 and the cult of the sky-god, the tribal king or chieftain tended to  
 personify that god, and be addressed by the same title. As noted by  
 Mr. Christopher Dawson in *The Age of the Gods*, in the case of the  
 Etruscans a whole mixed people are known to history as 'the Lords',  
 merely because their female cult-figure was Turan, The Lady, and  
 their male cult-figure Maristuran, Mars the Lord.

and from his lifted cranium where the priced tresses  
dragged with sweat stray his straight brow-furrows under the  
twisted diadem

to the numbered bones  
of his scarred feet  
and from the saturated forelock  
of his maned mare  
to her streaming flanks  
and in broken festoons for her quivering fetlocks  
he was caparison'd in the flora  
of the woodlands of Britain  
and like a stricken numen of the woods  
he rode  
with the trophies of the woods  
upon him  
who rode  
for the healing of the woods  
and because of the hog.

Like the breast of the cock-thrush that is torn in the  
hedge-war when bright on the native mottle the deeper mottl-  
ing is and brighting the diversity of textures and crystal-  
bright on the delicate fret the clear dew-drops gleam: so  
was his dappling and his dreadful variety

the speckled lord of Prydain  
in his twice-embroidered coat  
the bleeding man in the green  
and if through the trellis of green  
and between the rents of the needlework  
the whiteness of his body shone  
so did his dark wounds glisten.

And if his eyes, from their scrutiny of the hog-track and  
from considering the hog, turned to consider the men of  
the host (so that the eyes of the men of the host met his  
eyes) it would be difficult to speak of so extreme a  
metamorphosis.

When they paused at the check  
when they drew breath.

And the sweat of the men of the host and of the horses  
salted the dew of the forest-floor and the hard-breathing of

the many men and of the many dogs and of the horses woke the  
fauna-cry of the Great Forest<sup>1</sup> and shock the silent flora.

And the extremity of anger  
alternating with sorrow  
on the furrowed faces  
of the Arya  
transmogrified the calm face  
of the morning  
as when the change-wind stirs  
and the colours change in the boding thunder-calm  
because this was the Day  
of the Passion of the Men of Britain  
when they hunted the Hog  
life for life.

DAVID JONES

c. 1964 incorporating passages written c. 1950 or earlier.

<sup>1</sup> The initial letters are in capitals because the reference is not only to a large tract of forest-land but to a district name, Fforest Fawr, an upland area of Breconshire which formed part of the itinerary taken by the boar, Trwyth, and Arthur's hunt.

*Note:* This fragment is part of an incomplete attempt based on the native Welsh early medieval prose-tale, Culhwch ac Olwen, in which the predominant theme becomes the great hunt across the whole of southern Wales of the boar Trwyth by all the war-bands of the Island led by Arthur.

## A NOTE ON "THE SLEEPING LORD"

A brief note with regard to this fragment called provisionally "The Sleeping Lord" is, for the following reasons, necessary. First, as here printed, various of its passages are subject to revision and there are certain other passages that I had hoped to include, but have excluded, partly on account of length and partly because I have not, for unforeseen reasons, been able to get them into the shape I wished in time for publication in this issue of *Agenda* which the editor has most kindly chosen to devote to various aspects of my work.

Secondly, it chances to be a piece that is essentially for the ear rather than the eye. It chances also that owing to its subject matter it contains a number of words, mainly proper and common nouns, in Welsh. This in turn, has made it necessary to try to convey some approximate idea of the sound of those words.

For example, should the reader not know, that the Welsh *au* in, say, *mamau* (mothers) is similar in sound to the terminating syllable in the English words 'lullaby' or 'magpie', or the Latin word *puellae*, then the whole feeling of the sentence in which those words were in juxtaposition would be lost. I have therefore been compelled to append a number of notes attempting to indicate at least something of the sounds of such Welsh terms as I had to use in order to evoke the feel and ethos inherent in the *materia* or subject matter.

Here I must apologize to Welsh readers for these inadequate and elementary attempts. I fully realize that the approximations are extremely arbitrary and in some cases may be wide of the mark, but something of the sort had to be attempted and had to be as brief as possible. I have given the Welsh diphthongs *ae*, *ai*, *au*, *ei* and *eu* as approximating more or less to the English 'ei' in 'height', whereas in fact these diphthongs vary. In a few cases I give the English word 'eye' as corresponding to the Welsh *au*. For one of the two sounds of the Welsh *y* I give 'uh' as in the English 'u' in run, so that *Y Forwyn* (The Virgin) is given as being pronounced uh vór-win.

I have excluded all other notes from this version, except in a few instances.

DAVID JONES

*April the 1st, 1967*



## THE SLEEPING LORD

And is his bed wide  
   is his bed deep on the folded strata  
 is his bed long  
   where is his bed and  
   where has he lain him  
 from north of Llanfair-ym-Muallt  
   (a name of double *gladius*-piercings)<sup>1</sup>  
 south to the carboniferous vaultings of Gwyr<sup>2</sup>  
   (where in the sea-slope chamber  
 they shovelled aside the shards & breccia  
   the domestic litter and man-squalor  
 of gnawed marrowbones and hearth-ash  
 with utile shovels fashioned of clavicle-bones  
   of warm-felled great fauna.  
 Donated the life-signa:  
   the crocked viatic meal  
   the flint-worked ivory agalma  
 the sacral sea-shell trinkets  
   posited with care the vivific amulets  
 of gleam-white rodded ivory  
   and, with oxide of iron  
 ochred life-red the cerements  
   of the strong limbs  
 of the young *nobilis*  
   the first of the sleepers of  
 Pritenia, *pars dextralis*, O! aeons & aeons  
   before we were insular'd.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Llanfair-ym-Muallt: 'Mary's church in Buellt'. The town now called Builth Wells. It was between Llanfair and Llanganten that the Lord Llywelyn Prince of Wales was killed in 1282. Hence my reference to a *double* piercing in that any place-name with Marian associations necessarily recalls the passage in the gospel of the *gladius* that would pierce the heart of the God-bearer. Pronounce: llan-veir-um-mee-allt.

<sup>2</sup> Gwyr: The Gower Peninsular; pronounce approximately goo-er. It was in Gwyr that human remains, ritually buried, were discovered of a young man of the Palaeolithic period, so many, many millenniums prior to Britain becoming an island.

Is the tump by Honddu<sup>1</sup>  
     his lifted bolster?  
     does a gritstone outcrop  
 incommode him?  
     does a deep syncline  
     sag beneath him?  
 or does his dinted thorax rest  
     where the contorted heights  
     themselves rest  
 on a lateral pressured anticline?  
 Does his russet-hued mattress  
     does his rug of shaly grey  
 ease at all for his royal dorsals  
     the faulted under-bedding.  
 Augite-hard and very chill  
     do scattered *cerrig*<sup>2</sup>  
 jutt to discomfort him?  
     Millenniums on millennia since  
 this cold scoria dyked up molten  
 when the sedimented, slowly layered strata  
 (so great the slow heaped labour of their conditor  
 the patient creature of water) said each to each other:  
 'There's no resisting here:  
     the Word is made Fire.'

If his strong spine rest  
     on the bald heights  
 where, would you say, does his Foot-Holder kneel?  
 In what deep vale  
     does this fidell official  
 ward this lord's Achilles' heel?  
     Does he lap  
 the bruised *daudroed*<sup>3</sup> of his lord  
 and watch lest harm should befall the lord's person (which is  
 all that is expressly demanded of a *troed*<sup>4</sup>-holder) or over and  
 above what is of obligation does he do what is his to do with

<sup>1</sup> Honddu: pronounce hón-thee.

<sup>2</sup> *cerrig*: stones; pronounce ker-rig, 'er' as in errand.

<sup>3</sup> *daudroed*: two feet; (*dau*, two, + *troed*, foot). Pronounce approximately die-droid.

<sup>4</sup> *troed*: foot; pronounce troid.

some measure of the dedication of the daughter of Pebin of the Water-Meadow, who held in her lap the two feet of the shape-shifting Rhi<sup>1</sup> of Arfon?<sup>2</sup>

Or, silently, attentively & carefully

and with latreutic veneration

as did Mair Modlen<sup>3</sup>

the eternally pierced feet

of the Shepherd of Greekland

the Heofon-Cyning

born of Y Forwyn Fair<sup>4</sup>

lapped in hay in the ox's stall

next the grey ass in the caved *stabulum*

*ad praesepe* in heye Bedlem

that is bothe bryht and schen.

Does he lean low to his high office

in the leafy hollow

below the bare *rhiw*<sup>5</sup>

where the sparse hill-flora

begins to thicken

by the rushing *nant*<sup>6</sup> where the elders grow

and the tall-stemmed *ffion*<sup>7</sup>

put on the purple

to outbright the green gossamer fronds

of the spume-born maiden's hair.

It were wise to not bruise nor fracture  
by whatever inadvertance, these delicate agalma  
for of such are the things

made over to her.

Where, too, would you guess

might his Candle-bearer be standing

to hold and ward

against the rising valley-wynt<sup>8</sup>

his iron-spiked guttering light

<sup>1</sup> Rhi: King; pronounce rhee, 'r' trilled, 'h' very aspirated.

<sup>2</sup> Arfon: pronounce arr-yon.

<sup>3</sup> Mair Modlen: Mary Magdalen. Pronounce approximately meirr (ei as in height) mód-len.

<sup>4</sup> Y Forwyn Fair: The Virgin Mary; mutated forms of *morwyn*, maiden and Mair, Mary; pronounce approximately uh vór-win veir (ei as in height, each 'r' trilled).

<sup>5</sup> *rhiw*: a hill-slope; pronounce, rhee-oo.

<sup>6</sup> *nant*: a small stream.

<sup>7</sup> *ffion*: foxgloves; pronounce fee-on.

<sup>8</sup> *wynt*: mutation of *gwynt*, wind; pronounce wint.

The twisted flax-wick  
 (without which calcined death  
 no uprising, warm, gold-rayed *cannwyll*<sup>1</sup>-life)  
 bends one way  
 with the wind-bowed elder boughs  
 and the pliant bending of the wild elm  
 (that serves well the bowyers)  
 and the resistant limbs  
 of the tough, gnarled *derwen*<sup>2</sup> even  
 lean all to the swaying briary-tangle  
 that shelters low  
 in the deeps of the valley-wood  
 the fragile *blodyn-y-gwynt*<sup>3</sup>

And the wind-gusts do not slacken  
 but buffet stronger and more chill  
 as the dusk deepens  
 over the high *gwaundir*<sup>4</sup>  
 and below in the *glynnoedd*<sup>5</sup>  
 where the *nentydd*<sup>6</sup> run  
 to conflow with the *afon*<sup>7</sup>  
 where too is the running of the deer  
 whose desire is toward these water-brooks.

Over the whole terrain  
 and the denizens of the terrain  
 the darkening pall falls  
 and the chill wind rises higher.

<sup>1</sup> *cannwyll*: from Latin *candela*. Pronounce approximately *cán-ooill*; the double 'll' representing the Welsh *ll* for which there is no corresponding sound in English.

<sup>2</sup> *derwen*: an oak tree; pronounce *dér-wen*, the *er* of the accented syllable is like the 'er' in derelict or errand.

<sup>3</sup> *blodyn-y-gwynt*: flower of the wind or wood-anemone; pronounce *blód-din-uh-gwint*.

<sup>4</sup> *gwaundir*: moorland; *gwaun*, moor *tir*, land. Pronounce very approximately *gwein* ('ei' as in height) *deerr*.

<sup>5</sup> *glynnoed*: plural of *glyn*, glen. Pronounce *glún-noithe*.

<sup>6</sup> *nentydd*: plural of *nant*, a brook. Pronounce approximately *nent-ith*, 'th' as in breathe.

<sup>7</sup> *afon*: river; pronounce *áv-von*.





Is the season sequence out of joint  
 that leafy boughs should tremor so  
 for a night-fall gust  
 at this age, of the solar year  
 scarcely descendent as yet  
 from the apex-house  
 of the shining Twin-Brothers of  
 Helen the Wall?  
 Be that as may  
 by whatever freak of nature  
 or by the widdershin spell  
 of a wand-waver  
 this night-wind of the temperate Ides of Quintilis  
 blows half a gale & boreal at that.  
 Indeed, so chill it is  
 it strikes to the bone, more like the wind  
 of the lengthening light  
 of the strengthening cold  
 of round or about  
 the Ides of the mensis of Janus  
 when the wintry Sol has turned his back  
 to the heavenly thack of The Hoedus  
 and, coursing through the bleaker house of The-Man-that-Pours-  
 the-Water-Out, careens on his fixed and predetermined cursus,  
 with the axle-tree of his essedum upward steeved, under the  
 icicled roof of the februal house of The-Fish-with-the-Glistening-  
 Tails, when, still on the climb, he has, in part, his cours y-ronne  
 in the martial house of Aries whose blast is through with a  
 battering drive the thickest *pexa* of closest weave, and Mavors'  
*petrabula* (artfully virid is their camouflage) are brought to bear  
 for his barrage of steelcold stones of hail  
 which pelting of this pittiless storme  
 makes the stripped but green-budding boughs  
 moan and complain afresh to each other  
 yn y gaeaf oer.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> yn y gaeaf oer: in the winter cold. Pronounce approximately un  
 uh gúy-av oirr.

But whatever may have been the cause of this phenomenon and altogether irrespective of it and apart too from what is required and codified in the Notitia of degrees & precedence touching the precise duties of a lord's candle-bearer and as to where and when he must stand in the lord's *neuadd*,<sup>1</sup> it is the most likely thing in the world that you will, none the less, find him here, on the open *mynnydd-dir*<sup>2</sup>

for it is his innate habit to be wherever his lord is unless prevented by violence or by one of the lord's chief officers, for he is listed last on the roster of the named functionaries attendant upon the lord and is accounted least among them: what is he compared with the Chief Huntsman let alone the Chief Falconer or the Bard of the Household? And as for the Justiciar or the Maer of the Palace,<sup>3</sup> compared with these he is nothing

yet is he not the Light-Bearer?  
whose but his the inalienable privilege  
to hold upright  
before the Bear of the Island  
in his timber-pillar'd hall  
(which stands within the agger-cinctured *maenol*<sup>4</sup>) the tall, tapering, flax-cored candela of pure wax (the natural produce of the creatures labouring in the royal hives but made a true artefact by the best chandlers of the royal *maenol*)  
that flames upward  
in perfection of form  
like the leaf-shaped war-heads  
that gleam from the long-hafted spears  
of the lord's body-guard  
but immeasurably greater  
is the pulchritude  
for the quivering gleam of it  
is of living light  
and light  
(so these *clerigwyr*<sup>5</sup> argue)  
is, in itself, a good

<sup>1</sup> *neuadd*: hall; pronounce approximately nye-ath, 'th' as in breathe.

<sup>2</sup> *mynnydd-dir*: mountain-land. Pronounce mún-nith ('th' as in breathe) deerr.

<sup>3</sup> Maer: from Latin *maior*, The Mayor of the Palace. Pronounce very approximately meir, 'ei' as in height.

<sup>4</sup> *maenol*: the whole area of the lord's *llys* or court, in which the *neuadd* or hall stands. Pronounce approximately mein ('ei' as height) nol.

<sup>5</sup> *clerigwyr*: clerks, clerics; Pronounce approximately cler-ríg-weir.





has struck the post for the *pared*<sup>1</sup>  
to hear  
and for all the men  
under the *gafl*<sup>2</sup>-treed roof-tree  
of the *neuadd*, to hear  
whether they are seated or standing  
on either side of the wattle-twined *cancelli*  
below or above  
the centred hearth-stone  
(where the life of the household smoulders)  
to hear  
with his face toward the *Arglwydd*<sup>3</sup> and toward those about  
him, after he has said certain versicles, he begins the *bendith*  
proper, and with a slight inclination of his body toward the  
man that wears the golden fillet, he makes the life-sign over all  
the men in the smoke-wreathed *neuadd*, saying, in a clear voice:  
*Bene*✠*dic, Domine nos*  
and then, over the food-vessels, and  
over the distilled, golden *meddlyn*<sup>4</sup>  
in the drink vessels  
over the red-gilt bowl  
that holds the blood-red wine  
(freighted from *Bwrgwyn* via *Sabrina Aestuarium*)  
he makes the same signum, saying  
*et haec*✠*tua dona...*

<sup>1</sup> *pared*: screen or partition, from *parietem*. Pronounce approximately pá-red.

The hall (*neuadd*) of a Welsh chieftain was of wooden construction. Wooden pillars supported the roof-tree. It was partly divided into an 'upper' and a 'lower' hall by two half screens running from the side walls, rather as a church is divided into nave and chancel (*cancelli*). The fire (which must on no account go out, for it represented the life of the household) was placed centrally between the two half partitions. Each of the various officers of the court sat in order of precedence. The Silentiary (*Gostegwr*) struck with his rod one of the supporting pillars when silence was required. There is a Welsh proverbial saying about striking the post for the partition to hear (*Taro'r post i'r pared glywed*) which I presume, but do not know, reflects this ancient construction of the halls of these rulers as described in the Welsh Laws.

<sup>2</sup> *gafl*: fork. Pronounce approximately gáv-el.

<sup>3</sup> *Arglwydd*: Lord; pronounce approximately árr-glooith, 'th' as in breathe.

<sup>4</sup> *meddlyn*: mead; pronounce approximately meth ('th' as in breathe) lin.

and when he comes to the words which in the other tongue of men of the Island signify *trwy Iesu Grist ein Harglwydd*<sup>1</sup> he bows his head and then, in silence, inly to himself and but for a brief moment, he makes memento of those who no longer require such as himself to bless their meat & drink, for elsewhere is their wide *maenol*

at least, such is his hope.

His silent, brief and momentary recalling is firstly of those Athletes of God, who in the waste-lands & deep wilds of the Island and on the spray-swept skerries and desolate *insulae* where the white-pinioned sea-birds nest, had sought out places of retreat and had made the White Oblation for the living and the dead in those solitudes, in the habitat of wolves and wild-cat and such like creatures of the Logos (by whom all creatures are that are) and his silent memento is next of those who had made the same *anamnesis* in the cities of the provinces of Britannia which the Survey had aligned according to the quadrilateral plan, *per scamna et strigas* and had determined the run of the *limes transversus* for masons to wall the auspicious area with squared stone, which cities are now either calcined heaps or, if standing intact, are desolate and deserted of people.

*Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo!*<sup>2</sup>

How? Why?

It is because of the long, long  
and continuing power-struggle  
for the fair lands of Britain  
and the ebb & flow of the devastation-waves  
of the war-bands  
for no provinces of the West  
were longer contested than these provinces  
nor is the end yet  
for that tide rises higher  
nor can it now be stayed.

<sup>1</sup> *trwy Iesu Grist ein Harglwydd*: through Jesus Christ our Lord: pronounce approximately troo-ee yéss-ee greest ine hárr-glooith, 'th' as in breathe, 'h' strongly aspirated.

<sup>2</sup> See the First Lesson of the First Nocturn for Matins of Feria V in Coena Domini (Maundy Thursday) which begins '*Incipit Lamentatio Jeremiae Prophetae. Aleph: Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo*'.

And next his recalling is of those who made the same Oblation in the hill-lands and valley-ways, labouring among a mixed folk of low and high estate, some more rapacious, maybe, than the creatures of the wilds, being savaged by much tribulation, uprooted from various provinces, some come by thalassic routes from southern Gaul bringing with them a valuable leaven...

Or whether they offered the Eternal Victim within the wattled enclosures: *bangorau*,<sup>1</sup> *monasterii*, *clasordai*<sup>2</sup> where they live in common under the common rule of an *abad*<sup>3</sup> who may chance to be also the Antistita who alone is able to place upon any man the condition of being an Offerand. But once an *Offeiriad* always an *Offeiriad*. Nor does death affect this conditioning; for it is with the indelible marks of the priesthood of the Son of Mair upon him that he will, *yn Nydd o Farn*,<sup>4</sup> face the Son of Mair.

Or whether they stood solitary at the *mensa* far from the next nearest *claswr*<sup>5</sup> in the little white *addoldy*<sup>6</sup> under the green elbow of the hill, which the chief man of that locality has caused to be twined of pliant saplings and lime-washed without and within

or whether the merits of the same Victim are pleaded at the stone in the stone-built *eglwys* (its gapped roofing repaired, more or less, with thatch, its broken walling patched with unmortared rubble) that stands by the narrowing and silted estuary where the great heaped ruins are, that tell of vanished wharves and emporia and cement bonded brick & dressed-stone store-*cellae* for bonded goods and where walk the ghosts of customs officials and where mildewed scraps of sight drafts,

<sup>1</sup> *bangorau*: plural of *bangor* in the sense of a wattled enclosure of religious. Pronounce approximately ban-gor-rei ('ei' as in height).

<sup>2</sup> *clasordai* (plural of *clasordy*): cloisters or monastic houses; pronounce approximately clas-órr-dei.

<sup>3</sup> *abad*: abbot, pronounce áb-bad.

<sup>4</sup> *yn Nydd o Farn*: in the Day of Judgement.

<sup>5</sup> *claswr*: man from or in a *clasordy*, a monastic or priest. Pronounce clás-oorr.

<sup>6</sup> *addoldy*: place of worship. Pronounce approximately a-thól-dee, 'a' as in apple, 'th' as in those.

shards of tessera-tallies and fragile as tinder fragmented papyri, that are wraiths of filed bills of lading, litter here and there the great sandstone blocks of fallen vaulting... where also, if you chance to be as lettered as the Irish hermit up stream, you can read, freely & lightly scratched in the plaster of a shattered pilaster, in *meratores'* Greek, what seems to mean: Kallistratos loves Julia and so does Henben and so do I

and a bit more  
that you can't decipher...

or whether the same anamnesis was made in the *capel freninol*,<sup>1</sup> within the ditched & guarded defences of a *caer* of a lord of the land

as here & now, in the Bear's chapel.

And next, his rapid memento is of those lords & rulers and men of name in the land in times past: *penmilwyr*,<sup>2</sup> *aergwn*,<sup>3</sup> *aergyfeddau*,<sup>4</sup> *cymdeithion yn y ffosydd*,<sup>5</sup> *cadfridogion*,<sup>6</sup> *tribuni militum*, *pennaethau*,<sup>7</sup> *comitates*, *rhiau*,<sup>8</sup> *cadflaenoriaid*,<sup>9</sup> *sub-reguli*,

<sup>1</sup> *capel freninol*: royal chapel. Pronounce cap-el vren-nin-ol.

<sup>2</sup> *penmilwyr*: commander of soldiers. Pronounce approximately pen-mil-weir.

<sup>3</sup> *aergwn*: warriors, lit. dogs of battle. Pronounce eir-noon.

<sup>4</sup> *aergyfeddau*: battle comrades. Pronounce approximately eir-guv-véth-ei; 'th' as in breathe, 'ei' as in height.

<sup>5</sup> *cymdeithion yn y ffosydd*: companions in the defences or *fossae*. Pronounce very approximately cum-deith-ee-on un uh foss-sith, final 'th' as in breathe.

<sup>6</sup> *cadfridogion*: generals. Pronounce cad-vrid-óg-ee-on.

<sup>7</sup> *pennaethau*: chieftains. Pronounce approximately pen-éth-ei; 'ei' as in height.

<sup>8</sup> *rhiau*: kings. Pronounce approximately rhée-ei, 'ei' as in height,

<sup>9</sup> *cadflaenoriaid*: leaders in battle. Pronounce approximately cad-vlein-órr-ee-eid ('ei' as in height).

pendragons, *protectores*, *rhaglawiad*,<sup>1</sup> *strategoi*, *duces*, saviours & leaders of varying eminence together with *gwyr o galon*<sup>2</sup> of all sorts. Some but recent, others far, far, far back: such as Belinos of whom the Bard of the Household claimed to have some arcane tradition. About which, he, himself, the Priest of the Household, thought of uncertain authenticity; but, to say the truth, he was dubious of much that these poets asserted though they were indeed most skilled artists and remembrancers & conservators of the things of the Island, yet he suspected that they tended to be weavers also of the fabulous and were men over-jealous of their status and secretive touching their *traditio*, but then, after all, their *disciplina* was other than his and this he knew for certain that whatever else they were, they were men who loved the things of the Island, and so did he.

Then there was Cunobelinos the Radiant of whom he fancied he had himself found some mention in a Latin *historia*, but he could no longer at all recollect by what author—perhaps he had merely imagined it, which worried him; but he had in his younger years read in various works the names of which he could barely recall; but there was Eusebius, Orosius, Venantius, Prosper, apart from fragments, at all events, of both Greek and Latin authors of very great fame, *cyn Cred*,<sup>3</sup> and there was Martianus Capella and Faustus called 'of Regensium' because he had been consecrated *esgob*<sup>4</sup> to that place, but he was a man of this Island who had written well touching the Victim of the Offering. But now that he was many winters old, the diverse nature of what he had read had become sadly intermeddled and very greatly confused. But anyway his main

<sup>1</sup> *rhaglawiad*: governors of districts. Pronounce approximately *rhag-láu-ee-eid*. The accented syllable rhymes with 'vow', 'ei' as in height.

<sup>2</sup> *gwyr o galon*: men of valour (lit. men of heart). Pronounce approximately *goo-éer o gál-on*.

<sup>3</sup> *cyn Cred*: B.C. lit. 'before the Creed'. Pronounce approximately *kin kraid*.

<sup>4</sup> *esgob*: *episcopus*. Pronounce *éss-gob*.

concern was with Yr Efengyl Lan<sup>1</sup> and he liked to dwell on the thought that the word *efengyl* (owing, he supposed, to the kiss given at that part of the Oblation called the *pax*) could, in the tongue of his countrymen, mean a kiss. For what, after all, is the Hagion Evangelion if not the salutation or kiss of the eternally begotten Logos? And how could that salutation have been possible but for the pliancy of Mary & her *fiat mihi*? Which is why Irenaeus had written that this *puella*, Mair Wenfydedig,<sup>2</sup> was 'constituted the cause of our salvation'. Now this Irenaeus, away back, five or more long life-times back, in the days of his great-great-great grandfathers or beyond again, when the Ymherawdr<sup>3</sup> Aurelius, an able enough ruler, but much given to fine thoughts, high-flown principles, moralizings and the like (a type for which he had little use—he much preferred such as the Captain of the Guard) had, either by various *mandata* or by direct Imperial Edict, caused great harm to the *plebs Xti* and had made it perilous for the priesthood of Melchisedec to offer the Oblation for the living & the dead—anyhow, during that time, Irenaeus was an *esgob* in Gallia Lugdunensis, but had come there from the coast of Ionia in Asia (not very far from Galatia where there are men that speak the same tongue as the men of the Island) and this Irenaeus had known the holy man Polycarp who in turn had known Ieuan Cariadusaf<sup>4</sup> to whom had been committed the care & safeguarding of Mair the Mother by the direct mandate of the Incarnate Logos, even when he was reigning from the terrible stauros, his only purple his golden blood-flow

shed PRO VOBIS ET PRO MULTIS  
consummating in the unlit noon-dark

on Moel-y-Penglog<sup>5</sup>  
the Oblation made at the lighted feast board.

<sup>1</sup> Yr Efengyl Lan: The Holy Gospel. Pronounce approximately ur eh-veng-il lahn.

<sup>2</sup> Mair Wenfydedig: Blessed Mary. Pronounce approximately meirr ('ei' as in height) wen-vud-déd-ig.

<sup>3</sup> Ymherawdr: *Imperator*. Pronounce approximately um-her-row-der.

<sup>4</sup> Ieuan Cariadusaf: John the Most Beloved. Pronounce very approximately yei-an ca-rec-ad-iss-av.

<sup>5</sup> Moel-y-Penglog: 'Skull-Hill'. Pronounce moil uh pén-glog.

Hence what the ecclesia holds touching this *puella*, Mair, is, as stated by Irenaeus, of extra weight, seeing that his *traditio* was received so directly from Polycarp Hên,<sup>1</sup> the Antistita of Smyrna who had known and talked with the beloved Johannes, that the men of the Island call Ieuan or Ioan.<sup>2</sup>

And when he considered the four-fold account in the books of the *quattuor evangelia* he thought what are these if not a kind of Pedair Cainc y Mabinogi<sup>3</sup> *sanctaidd*<sup>4</sup>? in that they proclaim the true mabinogi of the Maban<sup>5</sup> the Pantocrator and of the veritable mother of anxiety, the Rhiannon<sup>6</sup> who is indeed the ever glorious Theotokos yet Queen of Sorrows and *gladius* pierced—what better, he thinks, than that this four-fold marvel-tale should be called The Tale of the Kiss of the Son of Mair?

Then there was the Blessed Bran of whom the tale-tellers tell a most wondrous tale and then the names of men more prosaic but more credible to him: Paternus of the Red Pexa, Cunedda Wledig<sup>7</sup> the Conditor and, far more recent and so more green in the memory, the Count Ambrosius Aurelianus that men call Emrys Wledig, associated, by some, with the eastern defences called the Maritime Tract and Aircol Hîr<sup>8</sup> and his line, *protectores* of Demetia in the west ... and many, many, many more whose bones lie under the green mounds of the Island; nor in his rapid memento of these many, did he forget the

<sup>1</sup> Polycarp Hên: Old Polycarp. The long Welsh *e* in *hên* is more or less as the 'a' in lane or bane, but is a pure vowel.

<sup>2</sup> Ioan: pronounce very approximately yó-an; as said it's one syllable.

<sup>3</sup> Pedair Cainc y Mabinogi: The Four Branches of the Mabinogi. Pronounce approximately péd-eir-keink uh mab-in-óg-ee.

<sup>4</sup> *sanctaidd*: holy, sacred. Pronounce approximately sank-teithe.

<sup>5</sup> Maban: a man-child, but here reflecting Mabon or Maponos the Celtic cult-figure the Son of Modron, the Mother-figure. Pronounce máb-an.

<sup>6</sup> Rhiannon: 'The Great Queen'. Pronounce rhee-án-non.

<sup>7</sup> Cunedda Wledig: pronounce approximately kin-eth-ah ('th' as in breathe) oo-léd-ig.

<sup>8</sup> Aircol Hîr: pronounce approximately fre-col heer. Agricola the Tall.



golden torqued *puellae* of gentle nurture, *arglwyddesau*,<sup>1</sup> *matronae* and *breninesau*<sup>2</sup> who, in their life-days, had sustained the men of the Island, but whose bodies lie as hers for whom was digged the square grave on Alaw<sup>3</sup>-bank in Mona Insula, and Creiddylad<sup>4</sup> the daughter of Lear than whom no maiden of the Island or of the isles in the waters that moat the Island could compare in majesty either in her life-time or in the ages before her or in the times yet to be; and Elen<sup>5</sup> the daughter of Coil, lord of Stratha Clauda between the Vallum & the Wall and there was she whose agnomen was Aurfron<sup>6</sup> on account, it would appear, of her numinous & shining virtue, for the epithet 'golden' betokens what is not patient of tarnish...

and there were Slendernecks and Fairnecks and she that was called Bright Day, the daughter of the *gwledig*,<sup>7</sup> Amlawdd (of whom some rumour that he was a *princeps* from over the Sea of Cronos, yn Nenmarc, owing, he supposed, to a complex tangle of like-sounding *nomina*, for according to the genealogies he was a man of this Island and a son of Cunedda Wledig) & there was the lovely Gwenlliant,<sup>8</sup> who though her beauty was indeed great, yet was she named by the men of the Island Y Forwyn Fawrfrydig,<sup>9</sup> because the shining virtue called *megalo-psychia*, the most prized of the virtues, exceeded even her outward splendour of form...

and many, many more whose names are, for whatever reason, on the diptycha of the Island; and vastly many more still, whether men or womenkind, of neither fame nor recorded *nomen*, whether bond or freed or innately free, of far back or of but recent decease, whose burial mounds are known or unknown or for whom no

<sup>1</sup> *arglwyddesau*: the plural of *arglwyddes*, the wife of a lord. Pronounce approximately arr-glooith-és-eye, ('th' as in breathe).

<sup>2</sup> *breninesau*: queens. Pronounce approximately bren-nin-és-eye.

Thus both these words rhyme with *matronae* and *puellae*.

<sup>3</sup> Alaw, rhymes with 'vow', accent on the first syllable.

<sup>4</sup> Creiddylad: pronounce approximately crei-thúl-ad, 'th' as in breathe.

<sup>5</sup> Elen: pronounce él-en.

<sup>6</sup> Aurfron: Golden Breast. Pronounce approximately eir ('ei' as in height) vron.

<sup>7</sup> *gwledig*: ruler. Pronounce approximately goo-léd-ig.

<sup>8</sup> Gwenlliant: pronounce approximately gwen-llee-ant (stress on the second syllable).

<sup>9</sup> Y Forwyn Fawrfrydig: The Magnanimous Maiden. Pronounce approximately uh vor-win vowr-vrúd-ig.

mound was ever raised or any mark set up of even the meanest sort to show the site of their interment; or those whose white bodies were shovelled into earth in haste, without funerary rites of any sort whatever; or those—a very, very great number, whose bodies, whether stripped naked or in full battle-gear were left to be the raven's gain and supper for the hovering kite and for the black-nebbed corbie that waits the *aerfor*<sup>1</sup>-ebb: the deeper the stillness of the *aerdawelwch*,<sup>2</sup> the higher heaped the banquet that she loves.

For these and for all the departed of the Island and indeed not only for those of the Island of the Mighty, nor only for those of the Patriarchate of the West, nor yet only for the departed of these provinces together with those of the provinces that are within the jurisdiction of the Patriarch whose seat is at Caergystennin<sup>3</sup>

where Urbs is Polis  
far side the narrowing *culfor*<sup>4</sup>  
that links Middle Sea  
with Pontus Euxinus  
where the Ymherawdr<sup>5</sup>  
wearing his colobium sindonis  
sits in the Sacred Palace  
but for the departed  
of the entire universal orbis  
from the unknown beginnings  
unguessed millenniums back  
until now:

#### FOR THESE ALL

he makes his silent, secret  
devout and swift memento.

And discreetly and with scarcely any discernable movement he makes once again the salvific sign, saying less than half-audibly: *Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.*

<sup>1</sup> *aerfor*: tide of battle (*aer*, battle + *mor*, sea). Pronounce approximately eir-vor.

<sup>2</sup> *aerdawelwch*: silence after a battle (*aer* + *tawelwch*, stillness. Pronounce approximately eir-dou-wél-ooch 'dou' rhymes with 'vow'.

<sup>3</sup> Caergystennin: The fortress (or city) of Constantinus. Pronounce keir ('ei' as in height) gus-tén-nin.

<sup>4</sup> *culfor*: a confined sea-way. Pronounce kfl-vor.

<sup>5</sup> Ymherawdr: *Imperator*. Pronounce approximately um-her-rów-der.

But had he said these words never so low or had the slight movement of his right hand across the folds of his tunica been even less than it was, the Candlebearer would have heard and seen; and though standing a good few paces from him, did hear and see, and, though the office of Cannwyllyd<sup>1</sup> gives him no right whatever to speak in the lord's hall, yet he could not contain himself, and though, the Lord Christ knows, he is not, by any means, a clerk, he sings out in a high, clear and distinct voice, the respond: *ET LUX PERPETUA LUCEAT EIS.*

So then, whether seated  
                                at this board in his hall  
or lying on his sleep-board  
                                in his lime whited *ystafell*<sup>2</sup>  
with his bed-coverlet over him to cover him  
                                a work of the Chief Stitching Maid  
to Yr Arglwyddes<sup>3</sup> (his, the Bear's wife)  
of many vairs of stitched together  
                                marten-cat pelts  
contrived without visible seam  
                                from the top throughout.

<sup>1</sup> Cannwyllyd: Candle-bearer. Pronounce approximately can-oóill-lid, ('ll=Welsh *ll*).

<sup>2</sup> ystafell: chamber. Pronounce us-táv-ell. The word here refers to the private apartment of the lord and his wife within the *llys* or court. It derives from late-Latin *stabellum*, a residence, and in the 9th century stanzas about the destruction of Cynddylan's court the word is used of the whole residence: *Stavell Gyndylan* in the original orthography.

<sup>3</sup> Yr Arglwyddes: the wife of the Arglwydd. Pronounce approximately ur ar-gloóith-ess, 'th' as in breathe.

Or, here, out  
 on the cold, open *moelion*<sup>1</sup>  
     his only coverlet  
 his madder-dyed war-sagum  
     where he slumbers awhile  
 from the hunt-toil:  
     carried lights  
     for the lord  
 in his pillar'd basilica  
     carried lights  
     for the lord  
 fain to lie down  
     in the hog-wasted *blaendir*<sup>2</sup>  
 scorch-marks only  
     where were the white dwellings:  
*stafell*<sup>3</sup> of the lord of the Cantref  
     ys tywyll *heno*  
 shieling of the *taeog*<sup>4</sup> from the bond-tref  
     *heb dan, heb wely*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *moelion*: plural of *moel*, a bare hill. Pronounce approximately moil-ee-on.

<sup>2</sup> *blaendir*: borderland, but meaning also uplands, high hill-country that is also a place of boundaries. Pronounce approximately blein ('ei' as in height) deerr.

<sup>3</sup> *stafell*: see note on the preceding page.

<sup>4</sup> *taeog*: a villein or man bound to the land. Pronounce approximately tef-og.

<sup>5</sup> *ys tywyll henno*: is dark tonight. Pronounce us tuh-will ('ll' represents Welsh *ll*) hen-no, *heb dan, heb wely*: without fire, without bed. Pronounce approximately habe dahn, habe wel-ee.

The use here of these two lines requires some explanation seeing that my knowledge of Welsh is so extremely scanty and that I have to rely in the main on translations. The lines quoted form part of one of the earliest fragments of Welsh poetry and seem to me to incant and evoke so much that is central to a great tradition at its strongest and most moving. They are part of a ninth century series of stanzas in which the princess Heledd of Powys laments the death of her brother Cynddylan and the destruction of his court at Pengwern (Shrewsbury) by the Angles. In the older orthography the words of this stanza read

*Stavell Gyndylan ys tywyll henno*

*heb dan, heb wely.*

'The 'hall' of Cynddylan is dark tonight, without fire without bed.' The words *Stavell Gyndylan* are repeated as the opening words of each of the (sixteen) stanzas so that they burn themselves into the mind, very much as do certain great phrases that echo in a Liturgy, as for example, the words I have ventured to use earlier from the Roman rite of *Tenebrae* 'How does the city sit solitary that was full of people!' Such words, as with these of the princess Heledd have a permanency and evoke a whole situation far beyond their immediate 'meaning' that, in my view, it is our duty to conserve them however little we 'know' the original languages.

And the trees of the *llannerch*?<sup>1</sup>

Why are they fallen?

What of the *llwyn*<sup>2</sup> where the fair *onnen*<sup>3</sup> grew and the silvery queen of the *coedwig*<sup>4</sup> (as tough as she's graced & slender) that whispers her secrets low to the divining hazel, and the resistant oak boughs that antler'd dark above the hornbeam?

*Incedunt arbusta per alta  
rapacibus caedunt  
Percellunt sacras quercus...  
Fraxinus frangitur...*<sup>5</sup>

Not by long-hafted whetted steel axe-blades  
are these fallen  
that graced the high slope  
that green-filigreed  
the green hollow  
but by the riving tusks  
of the great hog  
are they felled.

<sup>1</sup> *llannerch*: a glade. Pronounce *llan-nerch* the 'er' as in errand.

<sup>2</sup> *llwyn*: a grove. Pronounce *lloo-in*.

<sup>3</sup> *onnen*: ash tree. Pronounce *ón-nen*.

<sup>4</sup> *coedwig*: a wood. Pronounce *coid-wig*.

<sup>5</sup> *Incedunt arbusta...* Perhaps a note is necessary to indicate why I felt impelled to make use of a few words from Ennius, *Annals* Bk. vi, descriptive of the felling by woodmen's axes (*securae*) of the great spreading high trees which he apparently had taken largely from Homer and which Vergil was to use in part from him, and others also, so that the passage has become as it were part of a liturgy whenever the destruction of a woodland is involved. Round about 1936 or 1940 I first heard the Ennius fragment read aloud and the sound of the Latin words haunted me and although I could apprehend the meaning only very partially and patchily, I felt that surely form and content were marvellously wed and a subsequent reading of a translation confirmed my feelings. However, when in 1967 I wished to evoke some part of this passage it was clearly necessary to again consult a translation, and also a friend with a knowledge of Latin which I have not. Further I found it necessary to replace *securibus* by *rapacibus* in that my trees were brought down not 'by axes' but 'by tusks' and similarly *magnas quercus* would not do because none of the oaks of the Welsh hill-site I had in mind are by any means 'great' or 'mighty', but, on the contrary, strangling and stunted, so I replaced *magnas* by *sacras* seeing that insofar as one is concerned for and stands within the mythos of this island, the oak, of whatever sort, great or small, has for obvious reasons, sacral associations.

It is the Boar Trwyth<sup>1</sup>

that has pierced through  
the stout-fibred living wood

that bears the sacral bough of gold.

It is the hog that has ravaged the fair *onnen* and the hornbeam and the Queen of the Woods. It is the hog that has tusk-riven the tendoned roots of the trees of the *llwyn* whereby are the tallest with the least levelled low and lie up-so-down.

It is the great *ysgithrau*<sup>2</sup> of the *porcus Troit* that have stove in the wattled walls of the white dwellings, it is he who has stamped out the seed of fire, shattered the *pentan*<sup>3</sup>-stone within the dwellings; strewn the green leaf-bright limbs with the broken white limbs of the folk of the dwellings, so that the life-sap of the flowers of the forest mingles the dark life-sap of the fair bodies of the men who stood in the trackway of the long tusked great hog, *y twrch dirfawr ysgithrog hir*.<sup>4</sup>

Tawny-black sky-scurries

low over

Ysgyryd<sup>5</sup> hill

and over the level-topped heights

of Mynnydd Pen-y-fal<sup>6</sup>

cold is wind

grey is rain, but

BRIGHT IS CANDELA

where this lord is in slumber.

<sup>1</sup> Trwyth: pronounce troóith.

<sup>2</sup> *ysgithrau*: tusks. Pronounce approximately us-gíth-rei.

<sup>3</sup> *pentan*: hearth. Pronounce pén-tan.

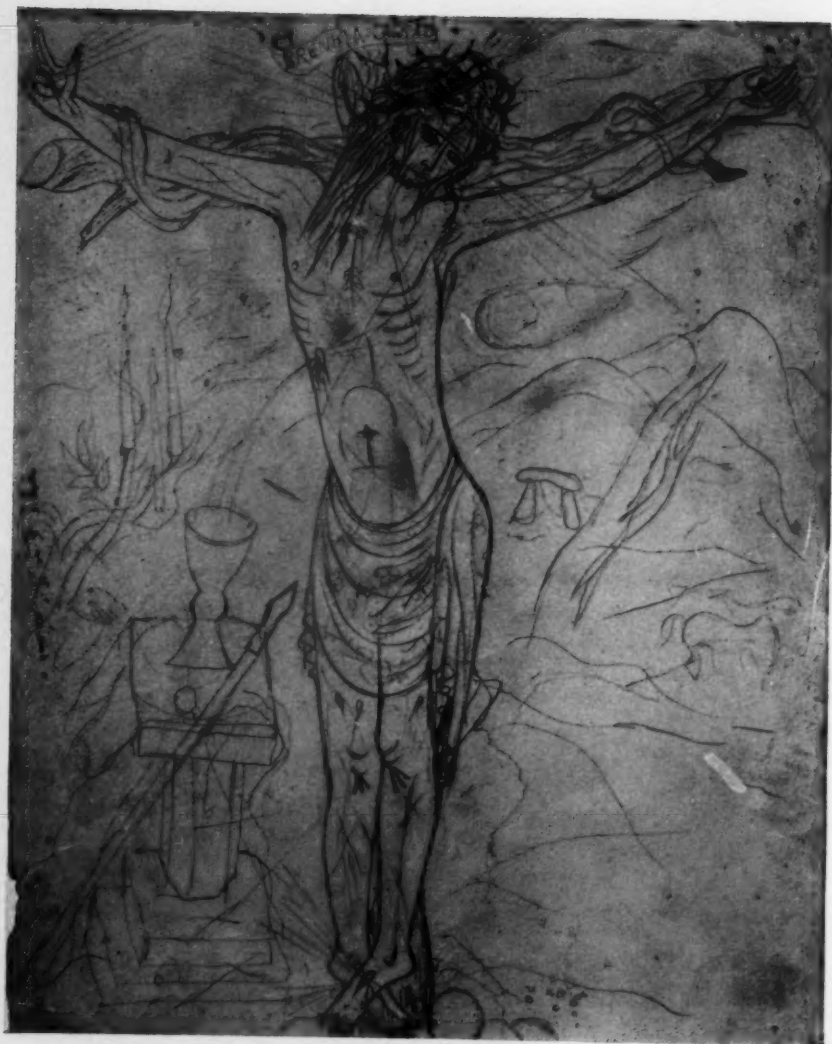
<sup>4</sup> *y twrch dirfawr ysgithrog hir*: the huge hog, long tusked. Pronounce approximately uh toorch deerr-vowrr us-gíth-rog heerr.

<sup>5</sup> Ysgyryd: pronounce us-gúh-rid.

<sup>6</sup> Mynnydd Pen-y-fal: pronounce mun-ith pen-uh-vál; commonly known as 'The Sugar Loaf'. The Welsh name of this mountain means 'the head of the summit'.

CLOELIA CORNELIA  
WITH THE PALMYRENE  
ET OVÆCVMQVE ERAT  
IN NVMERO ROMANA  
PVELLA AND IN THE WHITE ISLAND  
RHIANNON A DARGER  
ARIAN RHOD EIGR MAMARTH  
ESSLT CARIAO TRISTAN  
BY IN THE FIELDS OF EPHRATA  
THE PLIANT PVELLA  
WHO WOVE ALONE THE LOGOS  
HIS FRAGILE HAUBERT  
HVMANA NATVRA  
FOR HIS QVEST ALONE AT  
THE MOVND CALLED PENGLOG  
WHEN BOUGH BEGINS TO FROND AND  
LISSOM GWANWYN BRIGHTS THE WOOD  
BUT THE DREAMING BOUGH ON PENGLOG  
STABAT PVELLA INCLVTA







Are his wounded ankles  
                     lapped with the ferric waters  
 that all through the night  
                     hear the song  
 from the night-dark seams  
                     where the narrow-skulled *caethion*<sup>1</sup>  
 labour the changing shifts  
                     for the cosmocrats of alien lips  
 in all the fair lands  
                     of the dark measures under  
 (from about Afon Lwyd  
                     in the confines of green Siluria  
 westward to where the naiad of the *fons*-head  
                     pours out the Lesser Gwendraeth<sup>2</sup>  
 high in the uplands  
                     above Ystrad Tywi<sup>3</sup>  
 and indeed further  
                     west & south of Merlin's Caer  
 even in the lost cantrevs  
                     of spell-held Demetia  
 where was Gorsedd Arberth,<sup>4</sup> where the *palas*<sup>5</sup> was  
                     where the prince who hunted  
 met the Prince of Hunters  
                     in his woof of grey  
 and gleam-pale dogs  
                     not kennelled on earth-floor  
 lit the dim chase.)

<sup>1</sup> *caethion*: slaves. Pronounce approximately keith ('ei' as in height) ee-on.

<sup>2</sup> Gwendraeth: pronounce approximately gwén-dreith ('ei' as in height).

<sup>3</sup> Ystrad Tywi: The Vale of Towy. Pronounce approximately us-trad túh-wee.

<sup>4</sup> gorsedd Arberth: pronounce approximately gorr-seth ('th' as in breathe) árr-berrth, ('er' as in errand).

<sup>5</sup> *palas*: palace. Pronounce pá-l-lass.

who dreams his bitter dream

Does his freight of woe

his nine-day's fight

**toll his dolour**

<sup>2</sup> Sirhywi: pronounce approximately seerr-húh-ee.

<sup>3</sup> Ebwy: pronounce éb-wee.

<sup>4</sup> Taff: pronounce taf, the 'a' is short.

Do Afan<sup>1</sup> and Nedd<sup>2</sup> west it away  
 does grimed Ogwr<sup>3</sup> toss on a fouled ripple  
 his broken-heart flow  
     out to widening Hafren<sup>4</sup>  
     and does she, the Confluence Queen  
 queenly bear on her spume-frilled frock  
 a maimed king's sleep bane?  
     Do the long white hands  
 would you think, of the Brides of the Déssi  
     unloose galloons  
 to let the black tress-stray  
     web the pluvial Westerlies  
 does the vestal flame in virid-hilled Kildare  
     renew from secret embers  
 the undying fire  
     that sinks on the Hill Capitoline  
     Does the wake-dole mingle the cormorant scream  
 does man-*sidhe* to fay-queen bemoan  
 the passage of a king's griefs, westing far  
     out to moon-swayed Oceanus  
     Does the blind & unchoosing creature of sea know the  
 marking and indelible balm from flotsomed sewage and the  
 seaped valley-waste?  
 Does the tide-beast's maw  
     drain down the princely tears  
 with the mullocked slag-wash  
     of Special Areas?  
 Can the tumbling and gregarious porpoises  
 does the aloof and infrequent seal  
     that suns his puckered back  
     and barks from Pirus' rock  
 tell the dole-tally of a drowned *taeog* from a  
 Gwledig's golden collar, refracted in Giltar shoal?

<sup>1</sup> Afan: pronounce áv-van.

<sup>2</sup> Nedd: pronounce very approximately nathe, as in lathe or bathe.

<sup>3</sup> Ogwr: pronounce óg-oorr.

<sup>4</sup> Hafren: (Sabrina) pronounce háv-ren.

Or, is the dying gull  
                                   on her sea-hearse  
 that drifts the oily bourn  
                                   to tomb at turn of tide  
 her own stricken cantor?  
 Or is it for the royal tokens  
                                   that with her drift  
 that the jagg'd and jutting *morben*<sup>1</sup> echoes  
 and the deep hollows of *yr ogof*<sup>2</sup> echo  
 and the hollow eddies echo:

*Dirige, dirige*<sup>3</sup>  
 and out, far, far beyond  
 on thalassic Brendan's heaving trackway  
 to unknown *insulae*  
                                   where they sing  
 their west In *Paradisums*<sup>4</sup>  
                                   and the corposants toss  
 for the dying flax-flame  
                                   and West-world glory  
 in transit is.

But yet he sleeps:

                                  when he shifts a little in his fitfull slumber  
 does a covering stone dislodge  
                                   and roll to Reynoldstone?  
 When he fretfully turns  
                                   crying out in a great voice  
                                   in his fierce sleep-anger  
 does the habergeon'd sentinel  
                                   alert himself sudden  
 from his middle-watch doze  
                                   in the crenelled traverse-bay  
 of the outer bailey wall  
                                   of the *castell*<sup>5</sup> these *Eingl-Ffrancwyr*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *morben*: headland. Pronounce mórr-ben.

<sup>2</sup> *yr ogof*: the cave. Pronounce ur óg-ov.

<sup>3</sup> First Antiphon at Matins for the Dead, *Dirige, Domine, Deus meus, in conspectu tuo viam meam.*

<sup>4</sup> Burial Service, Roman Rite Antiphon, '*In paradisum deducant te Angeli*' etc.

<sup>5</sup> *castell*: castle. Pronounce approximately cáss-tell, 'll' represents the Welsh *ll*.

<sup>6</sup> *Eingl-Ffrancwyr*: Anglo-Frenchmen. Pronounce approximately ain-gl-fránc-weirr.

call in their lingua La Haie Taillée  
that the Saeson<sup>1</sup> other ranks  
                call The Hay  
(which place is in the tongue of the men of the land,  
Y Gelli Gandryll, or, for short, Y Gelli)  
Does he cock his weather-ear, enquiringly  
lest what's on the west wind  
                from over beyond the rising contours  
may signify that in the broken  
                *tir y blaenau*<sup>2</sup>  
these broken dregs of Troea  
                yet again muster?  
Does he nudge his drowsing mate?  
                Do the pair of them  
say to each other: 'Twere not other  
than wind-cry, for sure—yet  
                best to warn the serjeant below.  
He'll maybe  
                warn the Captain of the Watch  
or some such  
                and he, as like as not  
may think best to rouse the Castellan  
                —that'll please him  
in his newly glazed, arras-hung chamber  
                with his Dean-coal fire  
nicely blazing  
snug with his dowsabel  
                in the inner keep.  
Wont improve his temper, neither, come the morrow  
with this borough and hereabouts alerted  
                and all for but a wind-bluster.  
Still, you never know, so  
                best stand on Standing Orders  
and report to them as has the serjeancy  
the ordering and mandate, for  
you never know, mate:  
                wind-stir maybe, most like to be  
as we between us do agree  
                or—stir of gramarye  
or whatsomever of ferly—who should say?

or solid substantiality?  
you never know *what* may be  
—not hereabouts.  
No wiseman's son *born* do know  
not in these whoreson March-lands  
of this Welshry.

Yet he sleeps on  
very deep is his slumber:  
how long has he been the sleeping lord?  
are the clammy ferns  
his rustling vallance  
does the buried rowan  
ward him from evil, or  
does he ward the tanglewood  
and the denizens of the wood  
are the stunted oaks his gnarled guard  
or are their knarred limbs  
strong with his sap?  
Do the small black horses  
grass on the hunch of his shoulders?  
are the hills his couch  
or is he the couchant hills?  
Are the slumbering valleys  
him in slumber  
are the still undulations  
the still limbs of him sleeping?  
Is the configuration of the land  
the furrowed body of the lord  
are the scarred ridges  
his dented greaves  
do the trickling gullies  
yet drain his hog-wounds?  
Does the land wait the sleeping lord  
or is the wasted land  
that very lord who sleeps?

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DAVID JONES: 'A RECONNAISSANCE

Quick as a stoat, the terrier will seize the flying rat, but if a mouse runs across the dining-room the little basset hound will track it down laboriously, nose to floor. First, then, an apology to those who are more astute and quicker to seize the point than many of us, for to them much of what is written below may seem roundabout and superfluous. There is a valid excuse to hand: a great deal of praise has been lavished on David Jones's writings, but the wealth of metaphor employed has had the effect of obscuring rather than illuminating the work. The ordinary reader has the impression (particularly of the *Anathemata*) that it contains an 'obscure delight', but that the sharpness of meaning, patient of analysis, refuses to be pinned down, that the general theme may often be glimpsed but that at any given point the relation of what is being read to what has gone before or what is to follow, the ordered progress of thought and image, eludes him.

This pleasant but stupefying fog can be dispersed only by answering, in the simplest terms and at the simplest level, the innocent question 'What is it about?' Applied to *In Parenthesis* the question may seem almost too childish; but it is worth remembering that when it first appeared thirty years ago much of its technique, still strange in the late 'thirties, made the question seem worth asking, and that the answers often focused attention on what is an important but by no means the determining element in the writer's material: so that an exaggerated emphasis has ever since been placed on Welsh history and legend, and the Arthurian myth, especially in Malory's version.

*In Parenthesis* was almost the last of the 'war-books' of the 1914 war. One generation may have forgotten, and later generations perhaps have never known, the special character of the best of those books. Although *In Parenthesis* was unique in its quality, a number of other books of much the same date make a useful background to it, for they have common affinities not only by the accident of association with the same regiment, with the same Artesian countryside, with the Somme and Mametz wood, but also by their picture of that odd, permanent-seeming, troglodytic culture of the trenches: much of Roberts Graves's *Goodbye to All That*, for example, Siegfried

Sassoon's *Infantry Officer*, Llywelyn Wyn Griffiths's *Up to Mametz*, and in particular (is it ever read now or forgotten?) Frank Richards's *Old Soldiers Never Die*, the true voice of the old sweat straight from *In Parenthesis* itself. The books of that war generation had little in common with the flood of stories of adventure, escape, espionage, resistance, produced by the second war: only the R.A.F., in particular Bomber Command, knew anything of the continuous routine of danger and discomfort that was characteristic of the old western front, 'the intimate, continuing, domestic life of small contingents of men': a life that disappeared with conscription and with what we then took to be total war — 'it used to be fourteen in and five out regular — knew where you were — everything conducted humane and reasonable — it all went west with the tin hat.'

The basic theme of *In Parenthesis*, again answering the question on the lowest level, is simple enough, treated with a classical plunge into action, and in each section, a classical respect for the unities: the story of how John Ball, a private in a new-army battalion of a Welsh regiment (the choice of name, that of the priest executed for his share in the peasant rising of 1381, stresses the continuity of Welsh and British tradition), parades with his battalion for overseas embarkation, of the journey to Flanders, the march up the line, the first day in the strange trench world, their assimilation to the alien rhythm, their march to the assembly point for the Somme offensive, and the final attack on Mametz wood, in which John Ball is wounded and many of his comrades are killed.

So bald a statement contains nothing but the truth, however dismally it may fall short of the whole truth: but as David Jones's earlier watercolours are closely tied to observed nature, so is the book founded on a precise recording of the soldier's life. In a much more elaborately contrived way the same devotion to a strictly followed theme will be found in the *Anathemata* and in the later paintings, in which personal observation is expanded, interpreted, commented on by free imagination and memory. The technique employed is basically the same in both books, as in both plastic styles; in the paintings (and this can be noted in a smaller compass in the engravings) the development can be observed in successive stages spread over some thirty to forty years. In the written work the parallel development occurs with *In Parenthesis* itself, and then in the sudden efflorescence of the *Anathemata* — sudden, that is, to the reader, for the author the slow progress of ten years' hard.

You can hardly start to answer the first question 'What is it about' before you are involved with the more searching question, 'How is it made?' First, the general shape or design: there is at least a superficial resemblance to the pattern of Irish epic poetry in the use of prose and song, but there is more than what at first appears to be a simple alternation between realistic narrative and lyricism. There are indeed, though they become less frequent as the book moves towards the climax, passages of almost pure narrative, often of humour: [a working party is sent to collect tools].

No human being was visible in the trench or on the open track. A man, seemingly native to the place, a little thick man, swathed with sacking, a limp, saturated bandolier thrown over one shoulder and with no other accoutrements, gorgeted in woollen Balaclava, groped out from between two tottering corrugated uprights, his great moustaches beaded with condensation under his nose. Thickly greaved with mud so that his boots and puttees and sandbag tie-ons were become one whole of trickling ochre. His minute pipe had its smoking bowl turned inversely. He spoke slowly. He told the corporal that this was where shovels were usually drawn for any fatigue in the supports. He slipped back quickly, with a certain animal caution, into his hole; to almost immediately poke out his wool-work head, to ask if anyone had the time of day or could spare him some dark shag or a picture-paper. Further, should they meet a white dog in the trench her name was Belle, and he would like to catch any bastard giving this Belle the boot.

John Ball told him the time of day.

No one had any dark shag.

No one had a picture-paper.

They certainly would be kind to the bitch Belle. They'd give her half their iron rations — Jesus — they'd let her bite their backsides without a murmur.

He draws to the sacking curtain over his lair.

Even in such passages the writing is (to use a favourite adjective) curiously joinered — as, indeed, is all his prose, whether imaginative, expository or speculative — and there is in fact only a steady progression in the intensity of the charge which the words carry. Visually, it appears at times that the tension of narrative has so mounted that it must be relieved by a lyrical interlude. The distinction, however, between

realism and lyricism obscures the quality that is common to both. Both are written with the same excited contemplation, and the verse form is used not to mark the introduction of a new element but to add emphasis by allowing separate images — nuclei of images would be better — to emerge individually; in the 'prose' there is often as much lyrical quality as in the verse: as witness the alternations in the climax of Part 7 — typically:

But sweet sister death has gone debauched to-day and  
stalks on this high ground with strumpet confidence, makes  
no coy veiling of her appetite but leers from you to me with  
all her parts discovered.

By one and one the line gaps, where her fancy will —  
howsoever they may howl for their virginity  
she holds them — who impinge less on space  
sink limply to a heap  
nourish a lesser category of being  
like those other who fructify the land  
like Tristram

But how intolerably bright the morning is where we who are  
alive and remain, walk lifted up, carried forward by an  
effective word.

This belief is supported by the reversal of the process in the *Anathemata* in which some of the most highly charged passages throw off any restriction of verse form: noticeable examples are two of the great emotional peaks, the loves of the Lady of the Pool and the Guenevere sequence in Part 7, the 'set piece', too, of the Mars-Rome union in Part 2 — contrast with these the alternations referred to in Part 7 of *In Parenthesis*.

In the earlier part of *In Parenthesis* the tension is sometimes released in a rhetorical outburst, a method soon abandoned. Thus, at the end of Part 2, John Ball's first experience of high explosive is matched by an adjectival bombardment. The adjective remains, however, as a favourite tool, but used in a particular and illuminating way: there is a special preference for the past participle form — almost any page chosen at random will provide examples ('white the darked bay's wide bowl'; 'a sky-shaft brights the whited mole'; 'Scylla's cisted West-site'; carpentries of song are 'joinered'); it suggests that things are seen as deriving form not from an accidental quality but from an agent or maker; points, too, to a special and affectionate

interest in any material from which things are made by man, any matter which is informed by the spirit of the maker. This emerges above all in the *Anathemata*: the formative agency of glacial action, the Eb Bradshaw passage ('Redriff'), and most of all in the intense interest in and exact knowledge of the shipwright's art in Part 6 ('Tree-nailed the strakes ... raked or bluffed ... planked or boarded ... transom or knighthead ... hawse-holed or lathed ... grommeted, moused, parcelled, served'). This imposition of form on matter is, in fact, the only thing in which this maker is interested (and in that sense man as the imposer is the only subject of all his writing). The Joyce quotation in the Preface to the *Anathemata* is here peculiarly apposite: 'practical life or "art" ... comprehends all our activities from boat-building to poetry'.

Here the matter is the 'heap of all that I could find', the 'mixed data gathered from such sources [including, especially in *In Parenthesis*, personal experience] as have by accident been available'. At this point reference must be made to *Epoch and Artist* for it is not often that a writer discusses so clearly what he believes it is that informs the poet's work. Three passages are of particular importance. First, from 'Past and Present':

That famous psalm of exile [*Super flumina Babylonis*] provides a clue: 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning'... that is to say, our making is dependent on a remembering of some sort ... a deed has entered history, in this case our private history, and is therefore valid as matter for our poetry. For poetry is the song of deeds. But it seems to me that a deed that entered history a millennium, or fifty millennia, ago and which has been assimilated into the mythos of whole groups of men, perhaps of the whole group called mankind, is, *other things being equal*, of even more validity for our poetry... No one intimately and contactually involved in the making of works to-day would underestimate the almost insuperable difficulties of how to make the signs available for to-day. We can, in my opinion, assert little with confidence, but I think we can assert that the poet is a 'rememberer' and that it is part of his business to keep open the lines of communication.

Set side by side with this the devastating rejoinder (in the Preface to *Epoch and Artist*) to the contrary view, as expressed with 'serene [and disgusting] confidence' in a quotation from Edward Caird.

'It is the peculiar strength of the modern time that it has reached a clear perception of the finite world as finite; that in science it is positive — i.e. that it takes particular facts for no more than they are; and that in practice it is unembarrassed by superstition — i.e. by the tendency to treat particular things and persons as mysteriously sacred. The first immediate awe and reverence which arose out of a confusion of the absolute and universal with the relative and particular, or, in simpler language, of the divine and human, the ideal and the real, has passed away from the world.'

Finally, the answer to the objection that 'a reader may indeed appear to escape from all that is commonly or vulgarly meant by sacrament' (*sacrament* should be understood in the light of the whole essay 'Art and Sacrament'):

... but no sooner does he put a rose in his buttonhole but what he is already in the trip-wire of sign, and he is deep in an entanglement of signs if he sends that rose to his sweetheart, Flo; or puts it in a vase by her portrait; and he is hopelessly and up to his neck in that entanglement of Ars, sign, sacrament, should he sit down and write a poem 'about' that sweetheart. Heavens knows what his poem will really be 'about'; for then the 'sacramental' will pile up by a positively geometric progression. So that what was Miss Flora Smith may turn out to be Flora Dea and Venus too and the First Eve and the Second also and other and darker figures, among them, no doubt, Jocasta. One thing at least the psychologists make plain: there is a recalling, a re-presenting again, anaphora, anamnesis.

There can be an infinite variation in the subtlety with which the anamnesis is achieved; the relation of a particular man's experience, of his own private heap of data, to the common stock of human memory may extend over fields very different in width and content, determined by the theme (more restricted in *In Parenthesis* than in the *Anathemata*), by accident of birth education, acquired knowledge and interest. Sometimes there is a simple juxtaposition (the sergeant's 'Pick 'em up, pick 'em up — I'll stalk within yer chamber'), sometimes the vaguer echo, as of Malory (Book xx, Chapters 9 and 10) where Joe Donkin's determination to avenge his brothers is assimilated to Gawain's anger at the death of Gareth and Gaheris (*In Paren-*

thesis, pp. 144-5). Sometimes a thread, and it may be a multiple thread, can be followed through a long passage as it is interwoven with the fabric. In general the field of *In Parenthesis* is (by comparison with the *Anathemata*) more restricted. There is a close and natural association with Shakespeare (in particular with *Henry V*), with Welsh epic, with Malory, with biblical imagery, with the liturgy — a favourite metaphor is the hieratic order of soldierly manoeuvre: as the companies move off at night the liturgical 'Proceed ... without lights', etc., of Good Friday is reflected in

The ritual of their parading was fashioned to austerity, and bore a new directness.

They dressed to a hasty alignment,

They did not come to the slope;

by a habit of their bodies, conforming to monosyllabic, low-voiced ordering.

They moved rather as grave workmen than as soldiers from their billets' brief shelter.

A letter of the author's illustrates the process of anamnesis occurring simultaneously with experience — providing immediate material, as opposed to the material collected by reflection, by the writer of the 'thirties looking back to John Ball: (the battalion was then stationed at Limerick)

It was a red sundown and I was coming with some other Fusiliers along a wet hill-road by a whitewashed cabin and we met a girl with a torn white shift of sorts with a red skirt with a plum-coloured wide hem to the skirt which reached a bit below the knee; and she had auburn hair floating free over her shoulders and in the wind, and her feet and arms were bare and she had a long stick; she was driving a red-coloured cow before her and the evening sun bathed all these differing reds and bronzes... For some reason that's another image I associate with Troy — the red sunset on the red cattle-girl in Munster ... cattle raiders, horse raiders, soldiers, queens, queans, and the red as of flame — and the great dignity — well, *fuit Ilium*.

There are, of course, many other sources not always so easily identified: folk song (of the dead, 'they've served him barbarously — poor Johnny — you wouldn't desire him — you wouldn't know him from any other — leading here to *non est ei species neque decor* and later characteristically returning to the



concrete with the search to identify the dead at Hastings); negro spirituals ('there's no kind light to lead: you go like a motherless child'); sometimes a reference that a reader might share by accident (are there many admirers of the British Bluejacket, William Taplow, who greet his *ditty-box*, recall his *Knashing great bounder of a tooth*, and look in vain for his private blue silk muffler?). But the greatest part is played by London, for the author, Welsh on his father's side and enamoured of the British-Welsh tradition, is also a Londoner, serving in a battalion recruited both from Welshmen and Londoners ('good cockney bred, born well in sound of the geese-cry'), and the Welsh element is presented not as something on the periphery of, or even extraneous to, England, but as the core of the British-Romano-British-Angle tradition so that London, with the sister figures of Troy and Rome, is above all the city. Here (and this will become even more apparent in the *Anathemata*) the accidents of birth and association with the river-bank provide a solid foundation in observed reality: and this gives the London passages an assured directness and fluency which distinguishes them from passages in which the imagination is fed chiefly from literary sources.

In whatever way, however, association and allusion are used they are always only a technique of writing, serving to raise anecdotal realism to a higher level, so that every particular memory is placed in a long tradition of remembered deeds—added, as the author might say, to the deposit: nor can there be anything mechanical in their use. Quoting a phrase of Joyce, David Jones has himself written an illuminating comment on the way in which the fact of now must be wedded to form a poetic whole with its associations:

'Northmen's thing made southfolk's place.' I cannot recollect words from another source to express so briefly what I mean ... for they include also 'how then became now' and also they include the change of people on the unchanged site. All this they hold up even independent of the context. Given the context, we know the city referred to, and we have the Viking assembly or Thing, 'making', in the fulness of time, the Georgian assembly rooms and the Dublin of 'now'... Concept and universality are married to the local and particular. The marriage is secret (which has a bearing on the question of 'obscurity') but by it, all is achieved, and that by a positively text-book specimen of *Ars est celare artem* (*Epoch and Artist*, p. 210).







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To continue the metaphor in another direction, the marriage-lines may be seen as an incantation. 'Incant' is a favourite word with the author, and it sums up conveniently, if rather vaguely, all that is contained in such words as 'validity', 'potency', 'significance', 'romantic-associative', 'transubstantiated actualness'. It has a double meaning, both appropriate to these writings: first, the sense of a deliberate hieratic pronouncement. In this sense it can be used of the actual rendering by voice of the written words, which are intended 'to be said with deliberation—slowly as opposed to quickly—but "with deliberation" is the rubric for each page, each sentence, each word'. Anyone who heard the first broadcast production of *In Parenthesis* will remember how faithfully and with what tremendous incantative effect Dylan Thomas (à cui Diex bone merci face) read the words—above all the *Boast of Dai* (pp. 79 ff. — 'he articulates his English with an alien care'):

My fathers were with the Black Prinse of Wales  
at the passion of  
the blind Bohemian king...

Secondly, the incanted phrase or a word takes on a magical selfhood or unity of its own, the uniqueness of one particular artefact: an inscriptional value (sometimes indeed becoming even more of a potent sign by being recorded in inscriptional form—like the Joyce passage illustrated in the *Anathemata* or that from the Christmas preface, *nova mentis nostrae oculis lux tuae claritatis infulsit*, which enshrines one of the most significant motifs common to *In Parenthesis* and the *Anathemata*).

There are aspects of this use of words which may appear either puzzling or, worse, be dismissed as a mannerism, or as a short cut: not only the frequent use of Latin and Welsh words (occasionally German) but the equally frequent Latinization of English words. For the Welsh, little excuse is needed: it can never be more than a momentary inconvenience to the English reader in whose tongue no exact equivalent can be found to what is incanted, at least to a Welshman, by *gwledig* (rule-, chieftain; see *Epoch and Artist*, p. 110) or by *ein llyw olaf* (our last leader). In such cases it falls to the Englishman to learn, as best he can, to share the incantation. Moreover, it takes no knowledge of Welsh to see that, in a certain context, *emperor* will not do the same work as *ymherawdr*, nor *Guenevere* as *Gwenhwyfar*: similarly, at one remove, *the chemist's book* is a

very different story from *Vergil* (see *Anathemata*, p. 212, n. 12). Latin presents a different problem, for instead of the word evoking, at first, nothing in the reader, it may evoke something different from what is evoked in the author. *Stabat*, for example, may not 'hold up' heaven's queen, world's lady, 'total beauty by the Blossom'd Stem', so much as the dreary muddle and whine of 'Stations of the Cross at 3 p.m.'. (There can be no doubt that the same reference triumphs in another context — an unpublished poem — 'When bough begins to frond and lissom Gwanwyn [primavera] brights the wood, and by the dreaming bough on Penglog [skull, Golgotha] stabat puella incluta'.) One reader, at least, has progressively found that the solution is, first, to share the innocent eye which the author has retained and secondly to examine closely the context in which the Latin word or form is used. At first reading a reference to an entrenching tool as *inutile* may appear an affectation of style; but the function of the adjectival form becomes apparent when it is related to the discussion on 'the Utile' in *Epoch and Artist*, and to the use of that word in the *Anathemata* (e.g. 'the utile infiltration nowhere held' (p. 50) or 'the makers of anathemata can at a pinch beat out utile spares' (p. 90)). By the innocent eye is meant the power to keep the freshness of vision which fades as a language becomes more familiar (hence the dead and dreary translations of some professional scholars) — a good example of this freshness is the author's delight in the lettered handle of a German stick-bomb. Anyone who has read, or attempted to translate, a loved text in a language which he can only just master will understand how much keener is the appreciation before the magic fades, how much bolder the vision: witness the version of the *Iam redit et virgo* lines from the fourth eclogue (*Anathemata*, p. 213).

With this use of language we may connect a rather more elaborate manifestation of the 'secret marriage' (as in the Joyce), when a very precise sense is enclosed in a phrase which is superficially esoteric but yet discloses, to sympathy and experience, infinite recessions:

... before they unbound the last glaciation  
for the Uhland Father to be-ribbon *die blaue Donau*  
with his Vanabride blue  
O long before they lateen'd her Ister  
or Romanitas manned her gender'd stream.

On the other hand, if the reader loses anything by being unable to look into the author's mind, he may sometimes, and fairly, compensate by drawing from his own. (Was 'threw a pearl away...' included whenever the word *margaron* is used; or the staff-image — the sounding-pole — when St. Guthlac hears 'the bogle-baragouinage of the Crowland diawlaid'?).

Compared with the *Anathemata*, *In Parenthesis* is a crude and simple work — using 'crude' not as a term of reproach, but with the meaning of innocent, the work of an apprentice who, with simple tools and without the conscious skill of the master, has yet produced a master's work; greater experience, as anyone knows who has tried to make the simplest thing in any medium, introduces more difficult problems, the choice between the different ways in which a solution can be found, the seduction of more pigments, of more elaborate tools, and with it the knowledge that greater facility has only extended the field of possible error. The two works, however, overlap; there is much in *In Parenthesis* that could not appear in the *Anathemata*, but there is much that leads straight into the grander poem — grander, not because it is better of its kind but because its embrace is wider.

It is impossible to find any simple statement of the content of the *Anathemata* that will have even the truth of what can, at a pinch, be said of *In Parenthesis* — if you have to give an immediate answer to a conversational question. In a sense it is an argument for what, in a narrower context, is illustrated (or contained as a seed) in *In Parenthesis*: that if a sign is valid now, it is valid for all men at all times. The great *Boast*, for example, in *In Parenthesis*, is a poetic statement of the persistence through all ages of a tradition embracing all men, of which this small greatcoat-lurking Welsh fusilier is the immediate and yet the timeless symbol. In that boast Dai illustrates on a small scale — but in its own context in an equally heroic and sublime manner — the wider argument of the *Anathemata*. The author himself has given a brief answer to the question of content:

the artist, whatever he makes, must necessarily show forth what is his by this or that inheritance... The degrees and kinds and complexities of this showing forth of our inheritance must vary to an almost limitless extent.

'The degrees and kinds and complexities' can emerge only when the *Anathemata* is looked at in detail, and for this purpose it is the first part ('Rite and Fore-time') in particular that is

important, for it is both an introduction to, and a summary of, the later parts.

'Rite and Fore-time' dives straight into the heart of the matter. It opens with a presentation of the most potent of signs or sacraments, the canon of the Roman Mass; the priest is lifting up 'an efficacious sign' for *them*, for the people both of fore-time and of to-day. Immediately the theme is stated — the persistence now, in the old age of our culture, of what was pre-ordained long before, the validity of the sign

under the pasteboard baldachins  
as, in the young-time, in the sap-years

with the added image of columned temple and arched cathedral, nodding recognition over their ferro-concrete reproduction. The words *adscriptam, ratam, rationabilem*, add an important corollary: that the priest himself is performing an artistic or poetic action. The point emerges more clearly from a less literal translation, 'a thing consecrated and approved [an anathema], worthy of the human spirit',\* for the last phrase may fairly be interpreted 'made according to right reason', with which may be compared (from *In Parenthesis*) 'But he made them a little lower than the angels and their inventions are according to right reason', 'neither approved nor ratified' (p. 162), and (from later in 'Rite and Fore-time') 'how they [the authors of the Lascaux paintings] do, within, in an unbloody manner, under the forms of brown haematite and black manganese on the graved lime-face, what is done without, far on the windy tundra, at the kill.' This key-notion, here given poetic expression, is argued in the essay 'Art and Sacrament' (*Epoch and Artist*, especially pp. 168-9) and put with great force in the *Anathemata* Preface, in the passage ending

we could not have the bare essentials [i.e. bread and wine, not wheat and grapes] wherewith to obey the command 'Do this for a recalling of me', without artefacture. And where artefacture is, there is the muse ... something has to be made by us before it can become for us his sign who made us ... no artefacture, no Christian religion.

The influence of *In Parenthesis* memories is immediately apparent in the military metaphors for the men of to-day, 'these rearguard details in their quaint attire, heedless of

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\* From the Latin-English missal of the Rev. J. O'Connell and Dr H. P. R. Finberg.

incongruity, unconscious that the flanks are turned' — a passage illuminated by the reference in the Preface to the 'Break'. (These metaphors have become an integral part of the writer's equipment: a speculative argument will be seen as a reconnaissance, a sending out of patrols, a pushing out of saps — often they appear with delightful pungency: 'The Norman panzer-gangs are forgiven ... we are forcibly reminded of how Phryne's judges forgot her crime-sheet', 'the Dorian jarls rolled up the map of Arcady, and the transmontane storm-groups fractured the archaic pattern'). Immediately, too, the greater subtlety of technique is apparent. This day, for this people, leads gracefully to that day ('Sherthursdaye bright') when a few were gathered 'in high room, and one gone out'; and so by a happy transition to the dominating symbol that rules the whole poem, the ship, taking in on the way the water image (Aquarius, the man carrying a pitcher of water whom the disciples were to follow, the naiad, the water confluent with wine in the cup). This ship is introduced with great skill, linked to the table of the supper by the 'thwart-boards' common to both, and leading to a moving conflation of meaning in 'Who d'you think is Master of her?', equating the master of the gospel with the master of the ship and by song-memory (*Shallow Brown*) with all human voyagers and so with man's voyage through the middle age of this world. (The same *Shallow Brown* will return more than once, and particularly more boldly and equally movingly in the reference to 'the vine-juice skipper'.)

The passage that follows (mostly in a long parenthesis, pp. 55-8) introduces a further sign, the hill (the 'help-height'), and carries the divine plan (or rather divine artefacture) back into prehistory, 'before all oreogenesis', when from being 'lifted up' in one Great Summer in another Great Winter all the 'efficacious asylums' are down: Troy being introduced with great poignancy:

Little Hissarlik  
     least of acclivities  
 yet  
     high as Hector the Wall  
     high as Helen the Moon  
 who, being lifted up  
     draw the West to them.  
 Hissarlik, traversed Hissarlik



mother of forts  
hill of cries  
small walled-height  
that but 750 marching paces would circuit  
first revetted of anguish-heights.

The *Anathemata* is not presented as any sort of history, as *In Parenthesis* was not presented as a war-book, but as the latter distilled the essence of the early war years, so is the history of man now distilled, and primarily of man the maker, ('master-of-plastic' ... 'whose man-hands god-handled the Willendorf stone'), the master, too, of the utile (when 'the first New Fire wormed at the Easter of technics'). Here again there are occasions when *Epoch and Artist* complements the text. Compare, for example, with this passage of the *Anathemata* (pp. 58 ff., especially the reference to cup-markings and the Lascaux paintings) the treatment of 'anthropic sign-making' in pp. 156-7 of *Epoch and Artist*, and with the statement (p. 184) 'We were then *homo faber*, *homo sapiens* before Lascaux and we shall be *homo faber*, *homo sapiens* after the last atomic bomb has fallen.' This affirmation of universal kinship of all 'whose works follow them' is emphasized in the repetition

By what rote, if at all  
had they the suffrage:  
Ascribe to, ratify, approve  
in the humid paradises  
of the Third Age?

and by the repeated insistence *dona eis requiem ... dona ei requiem ... dona ei requiem sempiternam ... non perdidit ex eis quemquam*.

There follows a carefully contrived passage (parallel with that which deals with the emergence of *homo faber*) which describes the formation of the geographical environment of the British-Welsh-Anglo-Teutonic tradition, until, with the coming of recorded history, 'they rigged the half-lit stage for dim-eyed Clio to step with some small confidence the measures of her brief and lachrymal pavan'. The disappearance of the ice is related to the central image of the liturgical sacrifice, for 'this is how Cronos reads the rubric, *frangit per medium*, when he breaks his ice like morsels, for the therapy and fertility of the land-masses'; and it is to be observed (as will again be apparent



when the first voyages to the Tin Islands are recorded) how exact is the topography—as the best of pre-Raphaelite exactness is reflected in the later pictures, packed with precise concrete imagery.

'Rite and Fore-time' ends with a return to the original scene and theme, reasserting the community of man from fore-times to the 'sagging end and chapter's close', and introducing in the last sentence a further potent sign:

How else from the weathered mantle-rock  
and the dark humus spread...  
should his barlies grow

who said

I am your Bread?

Basset-like, the theme has been followed here in some detail (in greater detail than can at the moment be afforded to what follows); even so, the analysis hardly touches the fringe of meaning, for it is made up of a sequence of sharply defined, precise, exactly ordered images, in each of which further subtleties are focused. 'Rite and Fore-time' serves as a general introduction to the poem; the remaining parts (books would be a better term than part, for the division is that of an epic poem into books) develop particular aspects of the theme in such detail that the introduction can be called a summary in only the most general way.

'Middle-sea and Lear-sea' (i.e. the seas that wash the shores of Lear's kingdom, in particular the western approaches) returns to the root of western culture: Troy, the Roman beginnings, the Republic, the principate and empire (with, in the style characteristic of the *Anathemata* as opposed to *In Parenthesis*, a parenthetical interlude of imaginative lyricism in the sacred commerce of Rome with Mars, the 'square-pushing Strider'); woven into the historical pattern are the twin themes, the development of man master-of-plastic, from the Delectable Kore of sixth-century Athens to the 'skill years and the signed and fine grandeurs' (looking back to the 'O the Academies!' of 'Rite and Fore-time'); and secondly, the ship and the mariner (with the accompanying tutelary figure, Athene, star of the sea) culminating in the voyage to the Tin Islands of 'the caulked old triton of us, the master of us ... pickled, old pelagios'), and so leading, in Part 3, to Angle-land itself and the introduction of the third strand in the British fabric, the Germanic:

O Balin O Balan!  
how blood you both  
The *Brudersee*  
towards the last phase  
Of our dear West.

'Redriff' (Rotherhithe) berths the ship below the Pool of London and by one leap unites the old triton to the Eb Bradshaw, block and sheave-maker, of the author's youth, the Levant to Thameside:

Did he sign Tom Bowline on:  
ord-in-ary-seaman  
in place of the drowned Syro-Phoenician?  
Did he bespeak  
of Eb Bradshaw, Princes Stair:  
listed replacement of sheaves...

'The Lady of the Pool' is made the vehicle of an astonishing detailed commentary on the city and its buildings, as the heiress of Troy and Rome, strictly tied to the concept of London as a British, that is, a Welsh capital (a companion-piece to this section is the essay 'Wales and the Crown' in *Epoch and Artist*: one might well deduce from it the significance of 'the *Margaron*, sister ship to the *Troy Queen*, but slighter entranced, and in the water the wilder swan'). After the comparative simplicity and quiet of 'Angle-land' and 'Redriff', 'the Lady of the Pool' comes as a great outburst of emotion. On a larger scale it plays the part of Dai's boast. As the fusilier was identified with all the fighting men who went before him, and as the identification was extended until it culminates in

I am the Single Horn thrusting  
by night-stream margin  
in Helyon

So the lavender-seller, the dock-side tart recounting her loves, flounces through tradition and history until she is assumed into every palladic figure of womanhood.

'Keel, Ram, Stauros' returns in more detail to the ship-imagery—the keel on which the ship is built, the 'timber of foundation forechosen and ringed in the dark arbour-lands' providing a transition through the battering ram of Rome to the pole of fertility, and so to the tree, the ship, the cross of

salvation: 'the ancient staggerer, the vine-juice skipper' becoming steersman, priest, saviour, Christ.

With 'Mabinog's Liturgy' (the liturgy of infancy, of Christmas, of beginnings) the form of the poem becomes more sharply defined, moving from Gabriel's declaration to Mary ('since his Leda said to his messenger (his bright *talaria* on) *fiat mihi*') to the birth of Christ ('where we come in, not our advanced details now, but us and all our baggage'), to Calvary (in 'Sherethursdaye and Venus day'), and so returning to the unbloody artefacture of the Mass with which the poem opened. Although 'Mabinog's Liturgy' is a poem celebrating Mary, the poet is, characteristically, led away into a digression which honours another palladic Helene-Selene-Venus-Mary figure, Guenevere, a digression cunningly contrived with the Christmas liturgy in a picture of a Guenevere 'when to the men of this island she looked at her best, at midnight, three nights after the solstice-night,' with significance attached to every detail of dress and bearing proper to her queenly rank. There is a lovely return to the praise of Mary herself, first in the homage of the animals on Christmas night and then in the magic dialogue of the three Welsh witches:

... Wherefore we malkins three  
for all our sisters  
of Anglia et Walliae and of Albany  
our un-witched aves pay  
if only on this, HER NIGHT OF ALL.  
Unto the bairn, as three clerks inclining  
at the Introit-time  
Kneel, sisters!  
Graymalkin! Kneel  
Kneel my sweet ape  
whose habit is to imitate.

With the praise of the child there is a charming transmutation of the local Christmas truces of 1915—cf. 'the enemy front-fighters who shared our pains against whom we found ourselves by misadventure' of the dedication to *In Parenthesis*.

To conclude this cruelly compressed summary, in 'Sherethursdaye and Venus day' the child emerges from his *enfances* (as in the *Chansons de geste* the *enfances* are the deeds of youth or childhood), his song is no longer a *mabinogi*: like Peredur 'his wood-land play is done, he has seen the questing *milites*, he

would be a *miles* too: suitor, margaron-gatherer'. Now all the potent images are gathered together, water, cup, barley-cake, 'the Munera of Liber, poured, of Ceres, broken', the hill, the tree, with an ultimate return to the opening, where man today 'more precariously than he knows guards the signa' —

What did he do other  
    recumbent at the garnished supper?  
What did he do yet other  
    riding the Axile tree?

\* \* \* \*

Since the *Anathemata* two 'extracts from a longer work' have been published (*The Wall*, in a Poetry Supplement issued by the Poetry Society, 1957 and reprinted in this issue) and *The Tribune's Visitation* (first printed in the *Listener*, May 22nd, 1958 and to be published shortly by the Fulcrum Press). A third poem of the same group, *The Tutelar of the Place*, was read by the author for the Welsh service of the B.B.C., published first in *Poetry* and is now reprinted in this issue.

The 'longer work' may look forward to a new poem, but it can equally well apply to what has already been published; for the new poems overlap the *Anathemata* both in style and theme.

In style they are an extension of the freer, more direct and fluent manner of parts of the *Anathemata* (the Pool, the witches, the Guenevere sequence — as in painting there has always been a struggle to retain in the intensity and complexity of the literary pictures the freedom of the earlier Brighton sea pictures or Northumbrian landscapes). In theme each develops with melancholy detail, the curse on the destroyers of signs (megapolitan commercialism and imperialism) foreshadowed in the *Anathemata*.

Echoing the 'Wot'ld you do with the bleedin' owners' song of 'Middle-sea and Lear-sea', the legionaries on guard at the wall of Jerusalem ask

Do the celestial forechoosings  
and the hard journeyings  
come to this?...

Does the pontifex, do our lifted trumpets, speak to the city  
and the world to call the tribes to Saturnalia to set misrule  
in the curule chair?

— the men on 'the circuit of the agger, the traverse of the wall',  
ask why they march

... they used to say we marched for Dea Roma behind the  
wolf sign to eat up the world, they used to say we marched  
for the Strider... Now they say we march for kind Irene,  
who crooks her rounded elbow for little Plutus, the gold-  
getter...

we shall continue to march  
round and round the cornucopia  
that's the new fatigue.

More terribly, *The Tribune's Visitation* returns to the Augustinian conclusion of the Mars-Roma passage in 'Middle-sea':

though he was of the Clarissimi his aquila over me was robbery  
'T's a great robbery  
— is empire

All the remembered things are to be swallowed up in uniformity; 'bumpkin sacraments' are 'for the young-time'

song? antique song  
from known-site  
spells remembered from the breast?  
No! ...  
Spurn the things of Saturn's Tellus?  
Yes, if memory of them  
(some pruned and bearing tree, our sister's song)  
calls up some embodiment  
of early loyalty  
raises some signum...

Set, in time and place, 'where we came in, us and all our baggage', these two poems picture the plight in which we find ourselves — the 'rearguard details' for whom 'dead symbols litter to the base of the cult-stone': *sergeant, that shall serve for now.*

DAVID JONES AND THE PAST OF MAN

In the summer of last year, when in Vienna examining the great national prehistoric collections, I was given the opportunity of seeing for the first time the original of the famous Upper Palaeolithic sculpture usually kept in the museum safe, and known as The Venus of Willendorf. And as I held this numinous figure, the first words that flashed into my mind were not technical archaeological reflections on Gravettian *art mobilier* of 20,000 year ago, but a quotation —

Who were his *gens*-men or had he no *Hausname* yet  
no *nomen* for his *fecit*-mark  
the Master of the Venus?  
Whose man-hands god-handled  
the Willendorf stone  
before they unbound the last glaciation.

*The Anathemata* had bitten deeply into the consciousness of at least one archaeologist.

I suppose it is because I am a prehistorian that my most immediate contact with David Jones's work was made by the impact of this poem. I had read *In Parenthesis*, and had been delighted and moved by his paintings and engravings, particularly the *Ancient Mariner* set, but with the *Anathemata* I suddenly found that far from us having, in the phrase he has quoted from C. S. Lewis, "unshared backgrounds", by a quirk of circumstance his emotive referents were so often my own, from Mesolithic to Mabinogion.

The "devoted things" of the Greek title are the latent and underlying realities of the past of man, all the more real for being so often unperceived by prehistorian and historian. He defends the choice of the word as title with the support of Homer and St. John Chrysostom, but there is yet another significant instance of its use, almost too apt to be true. The Greek geographer Hecateus, writing in the fifth century B.C., is reported to have said that the Hyperboreans, a mythical northern people but located by him in the British Isles, had a notable circular temple dedicated to Apollo and adorned with *anathemata*. It does not matter whether or not Stonehenge or any other known and surviving prehistoric monument is referred to, but by Middle-Sea and

Lear-Land were these devoted things brought by matlos of the Maiden to Pretani-shore? At all events some people in Greek antiquity thought of *anathemata* in a British shrine, and it is in Britain that David Jones has made his offering of things loved.

The past of man is something continuous, and one can never be certain that it is really past, and not present or even more disconcertingly, future. Part of the excitement communicated by David Jones's poetry is the ambiguous position in which he puts his readers, disturbing their neat and safe chronological proprieties and the pedants' division of culture and creed. The archaic smile of the kouros is on the face of the "numbed and scurried top-tree boy" on the ship bound for Albion from Corbilo, and a sea shanty swings us past Langland's Rose the dish-seller and the Cockney Lady of the Pool to the ultimate mysteries of the Mass. And one is carried along, association linked to association so that one happily moves from the "oral gloss from a Heidelberg gaffer" to the words of Pilate in

the empty time  
after tiffin

and before his first stiff peg.

At the opening of *The Anathemata* there is a magnificent panorama of geology linked to humanity, where "nine-strata'd Hissarlik" is but a part of the great aggradations and deposits of history, one with the "microgranites and the clay-bonded erratics wrenched from the diorites of Aldasa" embedded in the strata of the glaciations. Even as an archaeologist (or because I am one) I should hardly have thought the Quaternary Period a subject for more than the most disastrous and pedestrian verse. "I once did hitch the syntax into verse", Calverley made Browning say in his parody of *The Ring and the Book*: David Jones has transmuted the Pleistocene into pure poetry.

Perhaps it is not for nothing that "deposits" is a favourite word of his, both in poetry and in prose. "Deposits" are an essential part of his poetry. "I believe that there is, in the principle that informs the poetic art, a something which cannot be disengaged from the mythus, deposits, *matière*, ethos, whole *res* of which the poet is himself a product". It is a significant and revealing word. Deposits may imply a slow historical process of accretion, stealthily forming silts, slow strata, the layers of a pearl; or again, they are the man-made caches and hoards — hidden treasures; votive, ritual and foundation deposits, and the last great deposit of all, the body in burial. Medieval (and indeed modern) Treasure Trove law turns on the question



of the *animus retrovandi*, the intent to recover which was in the mind of the man who made the deposit. Was the treasure buried with an intention or at least a hope that it would again be retrieved by the owner or his heirs? But whatever the *animus* may have been, its aspirations were not always fulfilled, and the treasure lay unregarded and lost. David Jones does not let poetic treasure trove go unclaimed: like the Crown in law, he steps in as *ultima haeres* to the deposits, and brings them splendidly to light. He explores poetic deposits with the anxious care of the good excavator (far better than Schliemann "who digged nine sites down in Helen's laughless rock"), alert for the unexpected feature, the illuminating oddness, the links that bind culture to culture.

To words themselves he applies a process of inspired nuclear fission. As you read, the simple-seeming syllables, in the context of their deposits, explode in a radiant and beneficent blast of highly charged meanings, associations and what the seventeenth century liked to call "correspondences". As a bard should, he displays his word-hoard, but the words are radio-active with history. Some of the scintillations may miss us, but enough hit their target to start up in ourselves a chain reaction of generated excitement. The words themselves will never be the same to us; they have been enriched historically until each is a piece of history itself.

Prehistory imperceptibly becomes history, and with David Jones this half-historical world of transition lies in Wales. Here again I find myself, almost by accident, sharing a background. Not perhaps so much because I am half a Welshman, though who knows what obscurely unconscious promptings may not have led me to early Welsh poetry, near-ignorant as I am of the very language? Few enough read Old English (even if far more than those who can master early Welsh), yet Beowulf and Caedmon are not so wholly strange to the educated reader as are the Gododdin or Llywarch Hen. The Saxons have had a temporary victory over the Celts here. But for those who have the frame of reference, here lie links from prehistory to Arthur, to the Grail, to the Church. Here too, among the perils and horrors of the haunted Celtic woods, lurks the persuasive demon of sentimentality. If he ever even risked an encounter with David Jones he would have been instantly repulsed by such a vehement Welsh-accented *Retro!* that he would have not left even a flickering shadow of a barbed tail.

"It is next to impossible for us" he writes of the early



Celtic church "not to feel 'romantic' *about it*" but this, as he says very firmly, is not because it was 'romantic' in itself. The early monasteries "bear the mark of tribal man"; "there is in the whole Celtic thing an elusive hardness"; he doubts "if the virtue of tolerance can have had much place" in this ancient society; above all, it would be a grave error to sentimentalise it as "kindly, tolerant, freedom-loving and romantic". To be intensely poetic about the past without any lapse into sentimentality is no easy thing. It can only come from an intellectual honesty leading to a determination to try to see each aspect of the past in its own terms, and not in the false terms of one's own presuppositions, which reduce the past into something safe and ordinary, instead of extraordinary, diverse and challenging. Henri Frankfort, a great ancient historian, deplored this tendency to "project the axioms, habits of thought, and norms of the present day into the past, which, as a result, seems to contain little that is unfamiliar to us. It is remarkable how rarely historians of ancient or alien civilizations have guarded themselves against this danger". We must, Frankfort said, try to find out what he called the "form" of a civilization or a culture, the unique qualities which made it a valid entity among other communities, and having perceived this "form", we must assess things in terms of this framework. David Jones has been wiser than many historians in his approach to the past of man.

PETER LEVI, S.J.

## THE POETRY OF DAVID JONES

*O, sister, do you remember the ballads over the  
nursery chimney at home o'my pasting up? There be  
brave pictures, other manner of pictures than these, friend.*

The strangeness and the freshness which belong to the vocation of every genuine poet can exist in modern language only in the unexpected strength of a highly specific phrase, or else through the powerful and mysterious influences of context and of formal devices. The most massive or the most feeble literary constructions and the most difficult disorientations can justify themselves in the strangeness, the freshness and the power that they make possible. This has always been so; in the past there was usually a pretence to convention, but now since for social and economic reasons the process of writing is more self-conscious, the problems are nearer the surface and are frankly presented to readers, so that the category of "experimental literature" has become itself rather strictly conventional. In the past a poet of such profound originality as Ben Jonson in *Bartholomew Fair* found in the theatre of his time a framework and a category that could cover the most astonishing new poetry; the poetic conception of this play and indeed its whole foliage and fruit, the whole tree were to get by without being noticed exactly as poetry or as innovation. By contrast to that situation the early poetry of Eliot seemed amazing, and some of the work of Pound and of Carlos Williams not only seemed but was probably meant to seem so. Yet the same kind of relation can be traced in these modern works between their disorientations and the proportionate power, freshness and strangeness of the poetry as one can see in *Bartholomew Fair* and in *Pericles Prince of Tyre*.

This is a somewhat elaborate way to open a discussion of the poetry of David Jones, but for me there is no other modern English poet who raises such enthralling technical problems, or who (besides Eliot) seems to offer so deep an insight into what poetry is and can do. It is more than a borrowed form of words to say that this insight cannot really be expressed, one cannot either see or know that one has understood it rightly except through writing an even better poem





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of one's own, which of course one cannot do. What can be said analytically is not very interesting, because particularly in a poetry that depends so intimately on the disorientation of its language, on the perpetual resonance of its reference to life, and upon the most accurate and specific shifting of weight, the experience to be analysed is essentially multiple and concrete. Even about Homer, about whom almost nothing can be written but banalities, and even about Milton, writing about whom is like trying to slide a knife into a silver apple, it would be easier to write than about David Jones. He is a unique, perhaps a difficult and certainly an original poet; the reward of his work is a gradual understanding of it which cannot be communicated. All one can offer is some scraps of general theory, some scrawlings in the margin, notes made while reading.

The special flavour of his poetry has continually become more intense, but it was already unmistakable in his long poem about the 1914 war. Since then his subject matter has ostensibly widened, he has become obsessed with the past, with prehistory, with human tradition and with local *numina*; the 1914 war, the Roman empire and mediaeval Wales have each of them furnished the raw material of his poetry; these themes have been important to him because they are the most present to his understanding of history and of modern life; his poetry is in a way a struggle to talk about the history of the world. He is not the only modern writer to have wrestled with these gigantic and powerful ghosts: in their different ways St. Jean Perse, Pound, Carlos Williams, Lowell and even Yeats have all done the same. Perhaps some theme of this kind was inevitable for a writer of the last fifty years who is still to command our most serious interest. These themes are fundamental to us just as certain themes were fundamental to the contemporaries of Aeschylus.

What is special to David Jones is the extraordinary variety and particularity of his language. It can be looked at in two ways: as an expression of all those local and historic diversities which his intelligence sets out to comprehend, and which his poetry does against every convention express, or simply as language, as the construction of a moral context as demanding, as multiple and as strong as that of Jonson's theatre, a concern with the texture of words and their effect on each other like that of figures and colours on a painting in progress, so that it has not been by chance that probably no writer since the time of Shakespeare has brought to bear

so wide a range of the English language and such different levels of it inside a few pages. It is from this second and I am sure secondary, moral and technical point of view that I am writing.

It is not necessarily on the level of its historic vision or even of a single, far-reaching poetic conception like that of Shakespeare's histories or of *The Tempest* that this difficult but marvellous poetry commands one's first attention. *In Parenthesis* opens with exact and comprehensive description: the language is deadpan and empirical, the effect is of gathering tension. The tension increases against the ominous notes of the poet's voice *in propria persona*, to which the darkest and most compassionate themes are reserved, but at the same time the unity of language is broken by phrases of common speech like Shakespeare's and by actual Shakespearean and epic references. There is a certain distancing into an epic and more religious world, in fact into another conception of life, but the perspectives are broken, the language is in tatters, you are startled by the reality and particularity of everything. The consolations of poetry and of religion diversify the levels of thought and language, but they are identical with the tragic foreground. In this connection it is important that the principal religious thoughts and feelings in David Jones' writings have to do with the Roman Mass, which is itself in a profound sense poetic and historical. *The Anathemata* in which this emerges is not so sharp and terrible a book as *In Parenthesis* but there is a certain epic bleakness in it, and even its triumphant passages, like the closing passages in *In Parenthesis*, are orchestral from a vocabulary of dark sounds.

How else from the weathered mantle-rock  
and the dark humus spread  
(where is exacted the night-labour  
    where the essential and labouring worm  
saps micro-workings all the dark day long  
                    for his creature of air)  
should his barlies grow  
                    who said  
I am your Bread?

It is hard to quote effectively from this poetry, because the final effect of any line depends on an accumulated weight of context too forceful to summarize and too subtle to trace.

The salt that preserves its freshness is largely its dependence on old popular traditions, fragments from folklore and from childhood, and phrases from common speech. David Jones' feeling for language of this sort is rather like his passion for the proper and popular names of things, which extends from military equipment to the technical language of geology and archaeology. Fragments of dead and dying languages sometimes seem to him somehow magical, and in his use of them they become so. A great deal of this has been learnt as a technique from Joyce, but it is also surely a matter of temperament which one should connect with the splendidly individual lettering of David Jones' inscriptions and with his whole view of history and of language. He has explained this in *The Epoch and the Artist*, particularly in the preface to the *Anathemata*. I suppose no one who had not well studied the language of Joyce and Eliot could have written of

'Hallows

by the shameful tree  
where the molls pray the Hanged Man and his  
Dolorosy Queen.

In his recent work the genuine snatches of remembered conversation which occur in *In Parenthesis* have given place to a compacted language, more economic but less urgently appealing, which is spoken by Roman soldiers and in which a mass of popular traditions is embedded. It seems important to look closely at the function of popular language in his poetry if only because it is so unusual in younger poets, and more so every year. Already in David Jones' poetry some of the common peoples' sentences are old-fashioned: like the diversities of place and cult that he so treasures, diversities of language are being ironed out. Of course such sentences as "Move them long York loins o'yorn" seem to be unkillable and are always cropping up, but we are committed to the end game of late capitalism, the progress of the world is irreversable, and the popular imagination and popular tradition that have guarded, nourished and recreated this diversity are perhaps beginning to dry up. This is at least a legitimate fear, and the fear conditions the way in which these beautiful scraps and tatters of speech are cherished and reused. Once again there is an analogy with *Bartholomew Fair*.

In the recent poems there is a certain judging strength about the language of the Roman soldiers that has its roots in the hellish world of *In Parenthesis*: the 1914 war seen by a



very young private soldier, whose innocence and intuitive fraternity are the only possible foundation for truthful and genuine war poetry. One of its results is that because he is neither guilty nor in any way distant, but simply human cannon-fodder torn away from his local origins, the poet as a young soldier is capable of a kind of beauty and even of optimism. He is a morally formidable human being; there is no moral crisis in *In Parenthesis* as there was for the officer poets of that war; its world is Dantesque but its only absolution is the recovery of dignity in the folklore of death.

Some she gives white berries  
some she gives brown  
Emil has a curious crown it's  
made of golden saxifrage.  
Fatty wears sweet-briar,  
he will reign with her for a thousand years.  
For Balder she reaches high to fetch his.  
Ulrich smiles for his myrtle wand.  
That swine Lillywhite has daisies to his chain —  
you'd hardly credit it.  
She plaits torques of equal splendour for Mr. Jenkins  
and Billy Crower.  
Hansel with Gronwy share dog-violets for a palm, where  
they lie in serious embrace beneath the twisted tripod.

To speak as an eyewitness and a private soldier, and at the same time with an accurate eye — "animals, like winded runners, seek the shade" — is in itself a strong position, stronger than some (I do not mean all) of Eliot's positions. In the *Anthemata* a sense of the identity of present events with ancient ones, which seems to have begun in the war, breaks wide open into an attempt to understand religion and tradition, but the position of an old soldier, his fraternity and his humanity and his direct understanding of a really terrible world, is never deserted. History is never a glorious pageant or any unattainable apotheosis of reactionary views, it may be poetic but it is always local and particular, a private soldier's view. The role of a prince when he does occur in David Jones' poems from Dai's boast in *In Parenthesis* to *The Hunt* is one of symbolic suffering; it has nothing to do with class values and cannot be understood without reference to the voluntary sufferings of Christ.



In a more impersonal poem like *The Tutelar of the Place*, the moral position of the poet is implicit: in the curious sweetness of the folklore and in the epic scale and gravity of what is remembered.

Tellus of the myriad names answers to but one name:  
From this tump she answers Jac o'the Tump only if he call  
Great-Jill-of-the-tump-that-bare-me, not if he cry by some  
new fangle moder of far gentes...

When the marauder leaps the wall and the wall dances  
to the marauder's leaping, where the plunging wolf-spear  
and the wolf's pierced diaphragm sing the same song..

One of the lessons of David Jones' poetry is that with any less degree than his of fraternity and humanity, an epic impersonality becomes impossible. The strength of his poetry is its dealing directly with vast and serious themes; this poetry is very individual, but it should not be seen as eccentric; it was only through a fragmentation of language learnt from Joyce and intuitively applied to the ungovernable memory of the 1914 war, through obscure knowledge and extreme curiosity and particularity, that it was possible for him to speak of this kind of reality at all, to use this kind of word and phrase at all. Once again, there is a remote analogy with Jonson in *Bartholomew Fair*, which liberated in Jonson a special kind of poetry and of sweetness, and at the same time (unless I am mistaken) a special kind of seriousness. The analogy is admittedly remote, there was never a more wonderfully conceived play so lamed in the execution; Jonson does not admit where his sympathies are, but pretends to take the line about the marvellous language which this play liberates that Price Hal took about the apprentices and the loaf of sugar: only Adam Overdo somehow unbuttons him to be in every way serious.

There was a certain kind of poetry written between the wars "hung with cockle-shells, pebbles, fine wheat-straws, and here and there a chicken's feather and a cobweb." David Jones' poetry on the contrary is marked by an extreme, even a difficult precision. *The Anathemata* certainly needs several readings, and one can grasp the precise relations of words only after mastering the material in the notes. Fortunately the notes are most interesting even if there were no text, so this is not a painful process. Any poet who needs to be precise and particular over an enormous range of language as well as facts must necessarily make such a demand.

And there

where, among the exactly faceted microliths  
lie the bones

of the guardian and friend.

How else Argos  
the friend of Odysseus?

Or who should tend  
the sores of lazars?

(For anthropos is not always kind.)

How Ranter or True, Ringwood  
or the pseudo-Gelert?

How Spot, how Cerberus?

(For men can but proceed from what they know, nor is it for  
the mind of this flesh to practise poiesis, *ex nihilo*.)

How the hound-bitches

of the stone kennels of Arthur

that quested the hog and the brood of the hog

from Pebidiog to Aber Gwy?

How the dog Toby? How the flew'd sweet thunder for  
dewy Ida?

I have not reproduced the notes to this passage; but even without them it is interesting for several reasons. Quite different kinds of language are being used, each of them somehow adding a new force to the others. The points of difficulty are points of precision. There is an impersonal gravity and an awe about space and time, but this is effective only because of the unassuming human generosity of feeling which goes with it. Both on the level of feeling and of language they contrast with and support each other. The archaic and frankly literary quality of the last line would make it less strong and far less moving in a more uniform context: here the sense of allusion makes its verbal beauty legitimate and very precise. The particularity of language of different kinds taken together releases an extraordinary strength. A close look at the two bracketed sentences and then at the three lines between them will, I think, make this clear.

The accumulation of the power of context in this way throughout a long work is immense. There are parts of *In Parenthesis* which I personally find it unbearable to read often and which I cannot read without tears. The context that is built up operates in the way of all poetry, resting its prolonged force on what had seemed simple phrases. A sentence that

in its context takes on a frightful power is the ordinary military order 'And don't bunch on the left for Christ's sake.' It comes as a sudden and therefore startling piece of direct speech at a moment of tight tension, and the oath breaks the surface of the language in both a very dramatic and another way. I believe John Holloway has pointed out that oaths function like this in the poetry of Skelton. But the use, the precision and the timing of a sentence should really be distinguished from the effect on it of the context of a long poem, which contains it in the way that the universe contains a human being. A context of this kind operates through and arises from the most exact uses of English, and from the whole armoury of poetic strength, but in the end it is inseparable from a sense of what the real universe (not the universe of the poem) is like.

There is an instructive contrast between David Jones and a very different writer, but one of the few certainly great modern poets, Constantine Cavafy. Cavafy's language is individual, and although he is a thousand miles from Joyce and had not, I suppose read Laforgue, he does (for different reasons) write on more than one level of language at a time. Also he writes about the late Roman world, his principal source being Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*. A seminal book for David Jones must I think have been Spengler's *Decline of the West*, which he has certainly not followed at a theoretic level, but the disturbed visions of which have perhaps haunted him. Cavafy writes with economy, and a rumbling, very strong irony, through which he breaks with direct and startling personal speech, and a sensuous power which in its way is without parallel. Each of these elements can exist only because of the others, and they strengthen and sharpen each other. Here the resemblance ends: the Roman world of Cavafy is essentially terrible, ominous and impossible to fight against; there are great examples in the past which only make the present more bitter; youth, beauty, and courage are the only positive elements. David Jones' Romans are old soldiers of the Boer War or 1914; their language is strong and strange; things are lightened or darkened not by the heroic past but by what is numinous, local and sweet, a reminiscence of a Welsh or British hill-cult; what they do is as terrible as what is done to them; it is the difference between Alexandria and North Wales: the contrast is not one of merit.

The Romans in David Jones' poems have some obscure sense of mission, but at the same time they were draughted to it and the mission is never quite comprehended by them.

It is in fact their mission that interests him, in that the world is universal and they have a meaning for the whole human race, but not exclusively so, since they are always at the same time brother veterans, with particular names and voices and particular local roots.

did the earth-mother  
blossom the stone lintels  
did *urvus* become *urbs*.  
did the bright share  
turn the dun clod  
to the star plan  
did they parcel out  
*per scamna et strigas*  
the *civitas* of God  
that we should sprawl  
from Septimontium  
a megalopolis that wills death?  
Does the pontifex, do our lifted trumpets, speak to the  
city and the world to call the tribes to Saturnalia to  
set misrule in the curule chair, to bind the rejected  
fillet on the King of the Bean?  
It's hard to trapes these things  
from the circuit of the agger  
from the traverse of the wall  
waiting for the middle watch to pass  
wanting the guard-house fug  
where the companions nod  
where the sooted billikin  
brews the night broth

It is not the particular world of the poems which is interesting, any more than the particular, limited world of Cavafy's poems, but the cumulative sense of what the whole world is actually like, and this sense arises gradually and powerfully only from repeated contrasts, fragmentations, openings and perspectives of language: it cannot unfortunately be conveyed by a quotation, nor could these poems be effective if they were short. A fragment of poetry is not like a gem that can overwhelm you without a setting; words can be effective only

through their partieuclar relation with other words; you could hardly imagine a Shakespearian one-act play. But the entire work of David Jones is like Uccello's picture of the hunt in the forest, extending in every direction among the trees

when to pierce the green  
and tangled tenebrae  
comes Apollo's ray

## David Jones

THE ANATHEMATA *excerpts* IN PARENTHESIS *excerpts*

THE HUNT  
RG 520

*Recorded in association with the British Council and the Poetry Room in the Lamont Library of Harvard University*

"THIS IS THE MOST INTERESTING  
AND IMPORTANT RECORD OF  
POETRY TO HAVE BEEN ISSUED  
FOR A VERY LONG TIME...  
ALL WITH AN INTEREST IN  
JONES' POETRY WILL NEED  
THE RECORD TO HELP IN  
THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF IT"

Celia White  
RECORDS AND RECORDING



115 FULHAM ROAD, LONDON S.W.3.  
A Division of the Decca Group

A NOTE

(Translated from the Welsh. Originally printed "by way of Preface" to the catalogue of the retrospective exhibition of 1954-5 at the Tate Gallery.)

It is a grief for David Jones that he has no Welsh. He reads what he can get of competent English translation of early Welsh verse and prose. He corresponds with scholars about the Ancient Books and old tales and the myth and Matter of Wales, and he treasures the grains thus garnered. He feeds his meditation and his imagination on the Welsh past; it is a key to his work as English poet and as painter.

Another key is the Faith. Observe the inscriptions, phrases from Introit or Gospel, shown here with the pictures. It would be a blunder to pass them by with merely a glance. The artist worked long at them, praying them to their shape on the paper, building them up with brush-work around and within them, even as pious Welsh mothers used once to embroider the Promises into samplers on cottage walls.

There's a passage in Part 4 of *In Parenthesis* where Dai boasts in the trenches of France; it borrows its plan from a poem in the *Book of Taliesin*:

This Dai adjusts slipping shoulder straps, wraps close his misfit outsize greatcoat—he articulates his English with an alien care.

My fathers were with Black Prinse of Wales

at the passion of

the blind Bohemian king.

They served in these fields,

it is in the histories that you can read it, Corporal—boys Gower, they were—it is writ down—yes.

Wot about Methuselum, Taffy?

I was with Abel when his brother found him,  
under the green tree.

That is how David Jones, poet and painter, sees things and paints them. Doric and Ionic and Corinthian columns, all the ages of Greece and Rome, are a background to the parenthetic travail of Aphrodite. The past is all a now, the eternal in the petal, tree branches in the clay of the teapot and in the brittleness of glass. The earth herself in her alert pain dreams of the hand that has shaped her. Nor man nor place stands alone. The scapegoat of Israel is caught in the barbed wire of 1915 and the trees of the field walk in through the windows of your house. David Jones is an artist who affirms that the vision in the final canto of Dante's *Paradiso* is an ever-contemporary fact.



"THE INWARD CONTINUITIES"

In *The Anathemata* David Jones has written,

For men can but proceed from what they know, nor is it  
for the mind of this flesh to practice poesis, *ex nihilo*.  
The poet is a 'rememberer', not responsible for the future but  
'in a certain sense responsible to the future' as he writes elsewhere.  
'We know what we are, but we know not what we may be'.  
Ophelia's question goes unanswered, but David Jones is one of  
those few who know what we *have* been; and that in itself is  
a very peculiar, very arduous exercise. Nevertheless there is a  
sort of hindsight that seems to descry some form, something  
reasonable, to set opposite 'mere anarchy'. He has described his  
writings as interrelated fragments, and of *The Anathemata*, 'What  
I have written has no plan, or at least is not planned'. I think  
this, however, should be taken with a grain of salt. The oftener  
*The Anathemata* is read the more convincing the unity becomes,  
for it is the unity of the man; unity at a deeper level than any  
forced design or planned artifice.

In these fragmentary times of disgust and dissolution David  
Jones is an artist and poet committed to the opposite cause; a  
builder who, in the oldest of all conflicts, is on the side of  
cosmos against chaos. An artist and poet who has handled the  
tools of the stone-worker, he is pre-eminently (and paradoxically)  
a great architect. Over the years he has designed and built a  
single structure. The paintings, drawings, engravings, the lettering  
and, above all, the writings are the material of this building; under  
the 'mantle of variety' and the differentiations, the 'inward con-  
tinuities' are what count. 'Tellus of the myriad names answers  
to but one name' as he wrote in *The Tutelar of the Place*, which  
is perhaps the finest of all the shorter pieces. The same unity is  
explicit or implicit in everything he writes. The *dramatis personae*,  
that seem like the whole population of the history books are not  
a rout, nor a chance collection of acquaintances met for a  
particular occasion to be discarded later. Each has his place and  
intention in the whole structure, whether it is in the context of  
the Great War, or of geological time, or of the present moment  
of spoken liturgy and acted celebration: Rite and Foretime  
are one.

This is the more remarkable because, in spite of a superficially increasing uniformity, the movements today are all towards fragmentation: in the specialisation of the scholar, the scientist or technician, it is the same. Everything is flying apart like our universe itself according to one interpretation, because 'the centre cannot hold'. In general, the well-made objects, the right actions, are presented to us as scattered, too soon dissipated, too small, tiny gestures quickly lost. Against this David Jones shows us a world that is a whole, concentrated and converging, a logical palimpsest where ages and persons juggle their differences and are found to be one age and one person. Dai and Taliessin, the Lady of the Pool, tutelary of *our* place and her Sea Captain, the hunter of the hog and the Trwyth. To understand what we are (and are not) by the light of what we have been is, it seems, the purpose and the achievement. 'We were then *homo faber*, *homo sapiens* before Lascaux and we shall be *homo faber*, *homo sapiens* after the last atomic bomb has fallen'. The history and prehistory of man is conterminous with the history and prehistory of man-the-artist. So from where we came in

to dance the Funeral Games of  
the Great Mammalia, as, long, long, long before, these  
danced out the Dinosaur

FROM the requiem of Neanderthal man by whom are

... the uterine marks  
that make the covering stone an artefact,

through all the artefacts can be seen 'the splendour of forms yet to come'. At the same time, under the assimilations, they never lose their identities for 'she's a rare one for locality'.

Engaged, as I have been for some little time recently, with a very prosaic, very factual account of man's early art, I have found that, when the ascertainable facts had been set in order, and a sort of skeleton fitted together, that anything worth while on this subject had already been said by David Jones, and that what I was looking for, the missing flesh for my skeleton, could be found in lines scattered through *The Anathemata* or one of the other writings. To take only art in its narrowest sense; there is an immensely concentrated history of the whole art of

sculpture in *The Anathemata*, starting between thirty and twenty thousand years ago,

But already he's at it  
the form-making proto-maker  
busy at the fecund image of her.

The carver of the Willendorf stone was a man essentially like ourselves except that he had not yet experienced our history. His handiwork, and the poor pots of Neolithic men, already contained that 'splendour of forms yet to come'. Then in the dark age of Greece

new-born shapes begin already to look uncommonly  
like the brats of mother Europa.

We begin already to discern our own.

Are the proto-forms already ours?

Is that the West-wind on our cheek-bones?

man-limb stirs  
in the god-stones

and the kouroi

are gay and stepping it

but stanced solemn.

and then the 'skill years'

O yes, technique — but much more:

the god still is balanced

in the man-stones

but it's a nice thing

as near a thing as ever you saw.

till

...the beginnings of the end and the waxing of the  
megalopolis and the acute coarsening of the forms, the  
conscious revivals, the eclectic grandeur

and again on 'west-portals'

when, under West-light  
the Word is made stone.

We have come full circle; and make no mistake, there is no impressionist licence here, the facts are deadly accurate. Knowledge about the past has increased at a vertiginous speed. We are no longer surprised by the revelation of our antiquity and the millennia of our inheritance, but the real application of this knowledge to the present has hardly yet begun; it does not

touch our ordinary thinking. Lost literatures from Sumer to Mexico now jostle with Greece and Rome, we can hear, if we wish, the songs of the eskimos and the pygmies, while the traditions of the visual arts no longer begin where we used to think they did, but come from mud walls in Anatolia, rock walls in France, and from among heaps of extinct animal bones in Austria or Moravia. The rocks themselves and the beginnings of life have lengthened still more the view. This is truism; but though we accept it at the level of the card-index and the radio news-item, it does not touch our calculations about the future; it is not, like Greece, Rome, Palestine, Renaissance Europe, an accepted part of our family history. But it is just this sort of assimilation of the past into the present, this putting it to work, acknowledging not so much our interest in it as its interest in us, which is so novel and almost shocking in *The Anathemata*.

The long and essentially 'interested' view of David Jones does not begin with *homo sapiens*, with Lascaux and Willendorf, but long before where the geological language of 'the slow sedimentations' gives up its raw mineral beauty,

Piercing the eskered silt, discovering every stria, each score and macula, lighting all the fragile laminae of the shales and because the eskered silt is still there for us to see, *that* past is also *this* present.

The *In Parenthesis* is almost as 'historical', as tintured with the past as *The Anathemata*, but no more so, perhaps, than the reality. If old Welsh and Norman French echo through the Somme battle, this is of a piece with Charles Carrington, another young soldier of the Great War, revisiting the same battlefield in 1923, poking about in an old trench, and coming on a Brown Bess musket from Wellington's last action against the French rearguard in 1815.

O revenants bleus de Vimy vingt ans après.

It seems there are not wars, but only war. In the notes to *In Parenthesis* David Jones records how trench life brought Shakespeare's Henry V to mind, and for Aragon in 1942 the captivity of Richard Coeur-de-Lion was the only possible metaphor for the Occupation. The immediacy, the recreation of what it felt like to be an infantryman in the middle of a battle 'walking in the morning on the flat roof of the world' is just as powerful when in *The Fatigue* the poet stands us on the wall of Jerusalem the Thursday night before the Crucifixion. The foreign and frightening distances of the past are our own family history with

its 'known and kindly nomenclatures', and these actions appear to take place in our own memories.

The poet's business is to 'keep open the lines of communication'; the war-time phrasing warns us of the gravity of the situation. 'Man-the-artist' finds himself, willy nilly, un-integrated with the present' he has said; and *The Anathemata* begins with perhaps the saddest lines that have been written in our time 'at the sagging end and chapter's close'. The great poem of time inherited springs out of the desperate fragility of time present, 'more precariously than he knows he guards the *signa*' the man 'unconscious that the flanks are turned'. Again the active service phrases remind us that this is the crisis at 'the turn of a civilisation' when (from a later poem) 'the technicians manipulate the dead limbs of our culture as though it yet had life'. One is reminded of the beginning of *The City of God* in John Healey's translation 'seated in the course of these declining times'.

In an essay on Religion and the Muses the 'terrible certainty and sinister perfection of the war weapons' is compared to the shoddy plastic that characterises our age, for commercialism 'keeps its demeaning hands off the weapons'. This, he says, shows where the treasure of modern man is, and surely he is right. If your life will one day depend upon the thing you are making, whether it is a rope, a bolt, a welding, a water-carrier or a flint knife, you will make it and handle it with respect, you will show it 'courtesy'. Here are reasons for the collapse of craftsmanship and design, the shedding of beauty from ordinary objects, from the 'artefacts' in the prehistorian's language: ephemeral and peripheral they no longer matter enough. But it is quite otherwise with expensive machinery and scientific equipment. However, even now, by inventing an entirely new art-form, David Jones has given a tweak to the tail of the forces of ugliness and utility. By his invention of 'inscriptional panels' eye, ear and understanding are equally engaged by a brilliant mosaic of languages; the groups of words like enamel cloisons, or the tiny miniatures on the cover of a reliquary, are in their parts intense infusions of our several inheritances, blended to the one inheritance. A blending, as it were, of different voices that only extraordinary daring and extraordinary knowledge could have made harmonise; but because of the 'inward continuities' they *do* harmonise, and each is, like all David Jones's work, an exact unity.











SOME RECENT PAINTINGS BY DAVID JONES

In this note I shall try to describe the impression made on me by some recent paintings and drawings by David Jones. The most fully worked-out is a large water-colour of Tristan and Essyllt (what we should call Tristan and Iseult) on board their ship, drinking the love potion. For this watercolour there exists a large drawing, and to compare it with the final version is to learn something of the thought and invention that David Jones puts into all his work. In both the foreground is occupied by the deck of the boat looking aft; in both the masts rise into a sky full of seagulls and of stars that tell us it is between day and night on St. Brigit's Day, the first of February; and in both Tristan and Iseult stand in the middle of the deck, with the disastrous cup held between them. But although the subject is basically the same, the two designs make a very different impression. The original drawing is dominated by the diagonals of spars and ropes that run down from the right hand corner and cut across the lovers. Tristan's face, stricken and dismayed, gains in intensity; but the forceful argument of these diagonal ropes annihilates Iseult, and her head is undefined. Yet she must become the motive force of the picture, so the ropes and spars must go, and leave her a space in which to assert herself. She becomes a formidable figure. The line of a stiff bow or steel spring, starts from a shadow on her face, and runs through her whole body till it joins the curve of the ship. She steps forward, one shoe off and one shoe on, leg, toes, and instep all painfully clear and close to Tristan's naked foot. She stares past him, triumphantly, defiantly, like one who has shot the lights, but also with some of the somnambulist's surrender of will. And from her tiny, vestigial head her yellow hair envelopes the wretched Tristan in a candy-floss whirlpool. Although embroidered with the emblems of chivalry, this is the same motive as Munch's Vampire.

Tristan and Iseult are not alone. Even in the first drawing a sailor is lying, half-hidden by the gunwale, his leg stretched out across the deck, and another comes up from below, his head emerging from a hatch, like a moon-calf witness. A cat walks towards him gingerly, its feet spread out to counter the move-

ment of the ship, which in their state of ecstasy, Tristan and Iseult do not feel. To these original inhabitants of his imagination David Jones has added other figures, who, beautiful as they are, remain immigrants or settlers. Amongst them are a quantity of sailors, some on deck, others struggling with the top sheets, who heighten the tempo of the drawing; but they lack the inevitability of the single sailor's leg and the cat. Only one addition has this quality, the cockboat or dinghy, that floats beside the ship, containing a present for King Mark of two Irish wolf hounds. The gunwale is bound with a fender of rushes that make it look like some coracle from the golden age.

As in all David Jones's work the sharpness of focus with which the details are seen varies from inch to inch. I am reminded of the hours I used to spend fishing off the coast of Skye, when, on calm days, one could look down many fathoms to gently undulating streamers of weed, sea-urchins, sea-anemones and puffs of sand, where the furtive flounder burrowed its way out of sight. Then a breeze would ruffle the surface and this garden of delights would be disturbed, but through a window of calm water one could still catch sight of certain man-defined objects, an old anchor or a discarded rowlock. So, in David Jones's drawing, the welter of clouds, seagulls and stars that surrounds Tristan's ship seems to be ruffled by the wind, but on the ship itself the mechanism of sail is made clear, with anchors, blocks and a contrivance known as a knight-head, drawn as sharply as Iseult's foot.

In spite of all that has been added to the final watercolour, it is possible to prefer the full-sized sketch. It has kept the vitality of rough weather; and, in the end, Tristan is more interesting than Iseult. He is elder brother to the private in the frontispiece of *In Parenthesis*, equally lost and vulnerable, the sacrificed man, the scapegoat conscious of his fate. How could he have been made to confront that triumphant doll? An artist as deeply personal as David Jones must be perpetually balanced between the needs of his inner world and the demands of his subject, with their influence on design. Behind all his apparent simplicity he has a strong conscious skill in the art of picture making; and yet it is the self-revealing moments of vision that count.

Next in importance to the Tristan and Iseult is a large watercolour, almost a monochrome, of the Annunciation. The scene is set in the Welsh mountains with stone circles and other signs of an earlier faith; and to some extent these old beliefs









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are continued, for the Virgin is also a nature goddess, surrounded by living creatures. Dozens of birds fly round her, providing almost the only positive colour in the picture. But the most brilliant of them is the goldfinch, the long-accepted symbol of Christian sacrifice; and when we turn to the angel, we see that he holds in his right hand a sword to which clings a broken strand of thorns. With his other hand he points to the stars, where Jupiter is coming into conjunction with Libra and Virgo; but this promise of the Virgin's destiny hanging above Her head is less vivid than the scene of nature at Her feet and our eyes return gladly to the birds and to the workmanlike fence of withies which forms her *hortus conclusus*. This fence actually existed, woven while David Jones was staying with Eric Gill in Wales, and David Jones made a drawing of it, which he kept for over forty years till it should come in handy.

On re-reading what I have written about the Annunciation I see that it might just as well be a description of a pre-Raphaelite picture. It is in the same vein as Ruskin's description of *The Light of the World* (although far less eloquent); and of course a David Jones watercolour does not look at all like a picture by Holman Hunt. The difference lies in the greater freedom with which, since 1910 or so, all artists have been able to treat appearance. Even David Jones, who like all visionary painters seldom takes a step outside the world of visible matter, selects as much or as little of an appearance as will fit in with his inner life or with (what is really the same thing) his peculiar calligraphy. Instead of his hand laboriously describing each object, it performs its own self-revealing movements in relation to the object, stopping and starting at the dictates of feeling, and sometimes seeming to break off in the middle of a phrase. I can well imagine someone unfamiliar with his work being puzzled because certain details (usually hands, arms and feet) are drawn with the skill and precision of a de Limbourg, while others seem almost childish. But these changes of focus come from a refusal to simulate intensity of vision where none exists. To an unusual degree David Jones knows when he is recording a vivid experience, and can give it the maximum of precision, and when he feels no more than a general emotion, and must be content with suggestion. So, in his best paintings, there are none of those passages of dull description that dilute the work of the pre-Raphaelites.

Some of the finest of David Jones's recent paintings are not of literary subjects, like *Tristan and Isolde*, but represent simply a vase of flowers on a table. A pleasant subject; but

we are not for long under the illusion that this is an ordinary 'still life'. The vase, broad and capacious like a Byzantine chalice of the eighth century, stands facing us on a plain table. Although no exclusively Christian symbol is visible, we at once have the feeling that this is an altar, and that the flowers in some way represent parts of the eucharist. There are wine-coloured carnations and ears of corn, thorny stems of roses and blood red petals, which drop onto the small white table cloth. Yet none of this is insisted on, and we are far from the closed world of symbolism. Every flower is there for a dozen reasons, visual, iconographical, or even on account of its name, and how far they can be interpreted as Christian imagery no one, perhaps not even the painter, can tell. All the great poets I have known have given very simple explanations of their most obscure passages; all the bad poets have given very profound explanations of their banal ones. David Jones is a great poet. He does not require obscure interpretations: although no doubt the alchemy which accompanies each stroke of his brush is infinitely recondite.

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David Jones

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THE ORDERED WORLD:  
'THE ANATHEMATA' OF DAVID JONES

It is very difficult to find people who know anything about David Jones. It may be that he is better known as an artist and calligrapher, or perhaps his deliberate Welshness is unnerving to the English temperament. It might also be the case that the storm of reactions evoked by his romantic compatriot Dylan Thomas has obliterated his impact on the poetic scene. These may be contributory factors to the comparative neglect and ignorance of David Jones's literary works, but a more profound reason is to be discovered in the very strongly medieval qualities of his poetic material and his vision of the world. *The Anathemata*, the subject of this article, is his second large work; it was preceded, fifteen years earlier, by *In Parenthesis*, a highly poetic, moving and original account of the author's experiences in the First World War, which is very much more than just a war book. In addition to these poetic works Harman Grisewood has edited a fascinating selection of David Jones's essays, letters, broadcasts and critical writings.<sup>1</sup> All of these publications are of a piece; they are informed by the same spirit, the same allusive, polyglot technique. *The Anathemata* has this difference, in that it is an attempt to create a kind of *summa* of poetic experience ranging through the world and time and has much in common with Pound's *Cantos*. The *Weltanschauung* of *The Anathemata* is one of a magnificent diversity, fundamentally optimistic and beautifully ordered. It is a coherent vision and one which—in contrast to much modern poetry—sees integration rather than disintegration as the chief characteristic of life.

*The Anathemata* is a work which defies attempts at classification. It shares the qualities of chronicle, epic, drama, incantation and lyric and is at the same time none of these and more than all put together. The poet himself defected in his own description of it as 'fragments of an attempted writing', and yet this does contain a necessary truth. He is right to call it an attempt—an attempt at a vision of Britain; and the fragments are inevitable, since the knowledge of one man must be fragmentary, though he may possess the perception of essentials

<sup>1</sup> *Epoch and Artist* (1959).

and the things that will stand for others and be the light shining in the darkness. Each poet seeks to recreate the world in his own image, that part of the world that he sees, but the overwhelming number, especially at present, confine themselves to the fraction, the aspect, the minute detail of life, on which they put the imprint of their vision. What distinguishes the *Cantos* or *Finnegans Wake* or *Ulysses* and *The Anathemata* is the fact that they are attempts to depict a *universum*; they represent a totality including the whole of history. This historical perspective, if the word is not too external in its connotations, is the animating force of *The Anathemata*, but it needs to be analysed before it can be properly understood. Wittgenstein said of philosophy that 'the problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known',<sup>1</sup> and David Jones's 'attempted writing' can also be seen in these terms. He uses the data of history, the ever-accumulating fund of knowledge, and arranges them in such a way as to make them point to the dignity of labour in the diverse service of man and God. This last sentence puts brusquely and crudely one vital aspect of the poet's work, not only in *The Anathemata*, but also expressed in various essays, especially 'Art and Sacrament' and 'The Utile'.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to be aware of this from the beginning, since the vision with which we are confronted is both strikingly positive and through and through Christian, two exceedingly unfashionable qualities for the mid-twentieth century. Perhaps only one firmly and deeply rooted in the Catholic tradition and with a keen awareness of what human creation demands could mould 'what we have always known' into a work of such subtle dimensions as David Jones has achieved.

The moving forces in his literary material are many and varied. The fact that he is a devout Roman Catholic explains the constant reference to the Bible, the missal and medieval Latin hymnody in the form of direct quotation, allusion or paraphrase, and this source provides the basic framework for his ideas and their exposition. Equally important is another autobiographical fact—his mixed Welsh and Cockney parentage, which gives him access to the deepest strata of emotions about Britain, the oldest Celtic Britain, and about London, the feelings that probably only a born Londoner can really have. No one

<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein; *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford (1953), para. 109, p. 47e.

<sup>2</sup> *Epoch and Artist*, pp. 143 ff.

else has ever better expressed that community of spirit and culture that there ought to be between English and Welsh, but which the English have by and large brutally and arrogantly ignored. The great link in this respect is the Arthurian legend, represented especially by the classical works of Malory, together with the tales of *The Mabinogion*, though with much more that the average Englishman will never have heard of. And then the material reaches back further still to the heydays of Greece and Rome, to Troy and all that went before it in the world's pre-history. In fact, in his long preface to the book the poet quotes as shedding light on his own work a remark from the introduction to Nennius' *Historia Brittonum*: 'I have made a heap of all that I could find.' As regards the subject-matter, this is probably the most accurate summary, but St. Irenaeus provides the best antiphon—if I may use that ecclesiastical metaphor—on the techniques of organization of the subject-matter: '*Nihil vacuum neque sine signo apud Deum*'. This dictum of a second century saint marks above everything the continuity of the tradition in which David Jones stands. In the Christian scheme the signs are, of course, related to God and Christ but the *Correspondances* of Baudelaire in substituting nature shows the continuing attractiveness of the idea apart from its specifically Christian use. It needs no special insight to point out that the sign, under the more usual name of 'image', is the most widely known and used device of poetic technique, but there are few writers who have explored and almost systematized its use with such telling effects as the author, who would probably prefer to be called the maker, of *The Anathemata*. The very word chosen as the title, glossed with such loving care and at such length in the preface (pp. 28 f.), is indicative of the many strands of thought running through the fabric of the poet's vision, as he himself says:

So I mean by my title as much as it can be made to mean, or can evoke or suggest, however obliquely: the blessed things that have taken on what is cursed and the profane things that somehow are redeemed: the delights and also the 'ornaments', both in the primary sense of gear and paraphernalia and in the sense of what simply adorns; the donated and votive things, the things dedicated after whatever fashion, the things in some sense made separate, being 'laid up from other things'; things, or some aspect

of them, that partake of the extra-utile and of the gratuitous; things that are the signs of something other, together with those signs that not only have the nature of a sign, but are themselves, under some mode, what they signify. Things set up, lifted up, or in whatever manner made over to the gods.

This description distils the method and theory underlying the composition of *The Anathemata* and points to the sense in which the 'heap of all that I could find' is meant to be understood. The following passage from 'The Lady of the Pool' may perhaps give an indication of the way in which the signs, culled from the most diverse sources, are combined and transmuted (p. 157):

On the ste'lyard on the Hill  
weighed against our man-geld  
between March and April  
when bough begins to yield  
and West-wood springs new.  
Such was his counting-house  
whose queen was in her silent parlour  
on that same hill of dolour  
about the virid month of Averil  
that the poet will call cruel.  
Such was her bread and honey  
when with his darling Body (of her body)  
he won Tartary.

The twentieth century has seen an extensive use of the art of collage in visual modes of expression, where the juxtaposition of objects has often had either a pure pattern or a representation of the contemporary experience of chaos as its dominant effect. *The Anathemata* is, in its way, a literary collage, but with the important difference that it is not meant as pure pattern or as representative of chaos, but rather as representative of order. The signs cohere; the heap is in fact a pile, as the Victorians would have put it, an edifice.

David Jones is a painter as much as a poet, and perhaps some will know him better in this other role. Indeed, *The Anathemata* contains, besides seven inscriptions, two illustrations—a drawing in pencil and body-colour and an unfinished wood-engraving. These examples of the visual arts, which are not



merely decorations, single out some of the primary signs of the whole work and crystallize some of the sources of the poet's vision. 'Merlin-land' and 'He frees the Waters' both belong to that corpus of Arthurian landscapes that Robin Ironside calls *Stimmungslandschaften*,<sup>1</sup> 'atmospheric landscapes'. There is a strange, dream-like quality about them. The figures and animals inhabit a kind of starry space, they seem to float through the heavens with only a loose anchor to hold them to earth. Both pictures are full of movement: the horses, deer and birds wander restlessly over the scene, even the trees are animated by an almost human vitality. Over everything lies an air of mystery and twilight that is the essence of what is depicted. Even if one understood at a glance the allusions and symbolism there would still remain something intangible, indefinable and elusive, rationally inexplicable and central to the artist's intention. 'Merlin-land' is the setting of the poem's scene, Merlin the Celtic incarnation of what Vergil, the seer and necromancer, was to the medievals in general; he is the presiding genius of the Arthurian atmosphere, the omniscient wizard. The legend on the title-page of *The Anathemata*—'This prophetic Merlin shall make for I live before his time'—emphasizes his primacy of place and underlines both the numinous geography of the poem and its visionary aspect.

The second illustration, 'He frees the Waters', is an allusion to the role of Peredur in *The Mabinogion* according to the author's own note on page 225, but when he says that Peredur 'frees and restores the Wasteland: the streams flow again, marriages are consummated and the earth fructifies', this is putting the story of Peredur, in which little if anything of this is explicit, into the background of rite and myth in the Grail legend that was explored by Jessie Weston in her seminal book, *From Ritual to Romance*. Here the Waste Land theme is made apparent and worked out in detail. It is well known that T. S. Eliot derived much of his stimulation and material for 'The Waste Land' from Jessie Weston, and in fact there are many points of similarity between Eliot and Jones, especially in their exploitation of their poetic material. The story of Peredur, more than that of any other knight of the last three tales of *The Mabinogion*, is one of liberation, and in this respect it is but a short step to the Saviour, Christ, whose signs and emblems are paramount among those that have a single point of reference

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<sup>1</sup> Robin Ironside, *David Jones* (1949), p. 16.

in *The Anathemata*. But Peredur's story is significant further in that it contains a request for knowledge and the annulment of wrongs, for the black maiden heaps reproaches on Peredur for his conduct at the court of the Lame King: '...and when thou sawest there the squire bearing the sharpened spear, and from the tip of the spear a drop of blood, and that running as it were a torrent as far as the squire's grip—and other marvels besides thou sawest there, but thou didst not ask after their meaning nor the cause of them'.<sup>1</sup> The reference to Peredur, again significantly from Celtic legend, combines ideas of search and positive achievement, of guilt and release, with the atmosphere both of mystery and of knowledge that is a peculiar characteristic of David Jones's poetic and artistic *oeuvre*.

If the pictures in *The Anathemata* illustrate the Arthurian and Celtic strata of the poem, the inscriptions denote the Latin, Christian and personal *momenta*. It is no aberration that five of these seven are actually in Latin, one in Old English and one in the modern language, this last a five-word pregnant quotation from 'Anna Livia Plurabelle'—'Northmen's thing made south-folk's place'.<sup>2</sup> How reverberatingly the changes of meaning are rung in these few words shows at one and the same time the type of technique that David Jones himself aims at and the extent of his indebtedness to Joyce as a literary master. The inscriptions, even the dedication *Parentibus meis et prioribus eorum et omnibus indigenis omnis candidae insulae Brittonum gentis*, are all texts as it were for sermons and meditations of a kind transcending the limits of a narrow 'believer's religion'. They are all of a piece with the actual poem itself, which is Roman in both religious and secular terms, because the story of Britain is also Roman.

The organization of the material is an extraordinarily complex affair. In this respect the poem finds its principles of composition in the tradition of medieval Welsh poetry, about which Gwyn Williams writes illuminatingly and with reference to David Jones in the foreword to his anthology of Welsh verse, *The Burning Tree* (p. 15):

The absence of a centred design, of an architectural quality, is not a weakness in old Welsh poetry, but results quite reasonably from a specific view of composition.

<sup>1</sup> *The Mabinogion*, tr. Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones (1957), p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (1957), p. 215.

English and most Western European creative activity has been conditioned by the inheritance from Greece and Rome of the notion of a central point of interest in a poem, a picture or a play, a nodal region to which everything leads and upon which everything depends. The dispersed nature of the thematic splintering of Welsh poetry is not due to a failure to follow this classical convention. Aneirin, Gwalchmai, Cynddelw and Hywel ab Owain were not trying to write poems that would read like Greek temples or even Gothic cathedrals but, rather, like stone circles or the contour-following rings of the forts from which they fought, with hidden ways slipping from one ring to another. More obviously their writing was like the inter-woven inventions preserved in early Celtic manuscripts and on stone crosses, where what happens in a corner is as important as what happens at the centre, because there is often no centre.

These remarks shed a helpful light on what a reader of *The Anathemata* might at first consider to be a formless, inchoate mass of deep thoughts and recondite allusions. There is no clearly conceived centre to the work, or rather, to adapt St. Augustine's definition of the nature of God, the poem is a circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. For the important substance of the poem is to be found at every point in it. The direction and intention of the words are apparent from the start. The act of creation, the 'efficacious sign', is hymned in the very first words (p. 49):

We already and first of all discern him making this thing other. His groping syntax, if we attend, already shapes:

ADSCRIPTAM, RATAM, RATIONABILEM ... and by pre-application and for *them*, under modes and patterns altogether theirs, the holy and venerable hands lift up an efficacious sign.

There is thus an extreme fluidity in the poem's structure of ideas. It is more like the sea with rivers running into it and islands than any building no matter how complicated; it is like the 'riverrun' of *Finnegans Wake*. And yet there are principles of construction about the work, as the division into eight named sections most clearly shows.

The first four sections deal with the cultural deposits of Britain in linked historical-geographical terms. In this way the first half of *The Anathemata* consists of an ordering of the

material beginning in the mists of pre-history and working progressively and exploratively to a point where, with the discovery of Britannia by the Romans, the separate identity of Britain begins and all historical levels are seen at once. Broadly speaking, the development of civilization—as far as we are concerned—coincides with geographical changes of focus. The beginnings are seen in general European terms, the bounds being sufficiently loose to include those lands of the near East, especially Palestine, Egypt and Mesopotamia, whose religion and culture are at the origins of much of Europe; and the time is 'fore-time'. From this the poem moves forward to the heyday of Mediterranean civilization and the incorporation of Britain into it. Time and place become more specific, and the links of culture are caught up in an extended sea image which goes through the whole gammut of names for it, Greek, Latin, Welsh and German (as representing the Teutonic stock of the English), from the Mediterranean thus to the English Channel (pp. 101 f.):

Now nor'-east by north  
                   now east by north, easting.  
 Sou' sou'-west the weather quarter  
                   by what slant of wind  
 they brought her into the Narrow Sea  
                   Prydain's *camlas*!  
 that they'll call Mare Austrum  
                   *Our* thalassa!  
 The lead telling fifty in the chops.  
 Then was when the top-tree boy  
 from *his* thalassa over their *mare* ...  
                   cried to his towny  
 before the mast-tree  
                   cries louder  
 (for across the weather)  
                   to the man at the steer-tree:  
 Pretáni-shore! Cassitérides!  
                   we've rounded their Golden *Cornu*.

The first two sections contain the most important of the introductory material and are followed by two much shorter ones, which continue the process of becoming more specific. 'Angle-land' brings the invasions of the continental Teutons and defines the geography by their name. 'Redriff' pinpoints the place to the south bank of the Thames. (Those of us who are

not Londoners are liable to find the allusions less transparent now, but the poet is assiduous in his annotations, and a map is also often of great assistance.)

The last four sections of the poem reshape the basic material no longer in directed, historical-geographical terms, but through larger circles of images. There is no break in the poem, for what had been marked by precise geography in 'Redriff' is taken up by the extensive section on 'The Lady of the Pool', where the manifold variations of *das Ewig-Weibliche* are concentrated in the Pool of London and its surroundings. This section is succeeded by one of a much more obviously composite order, as its title 'Keel, Ram, Stauros' indicates. Here the world of nature and the world of the utile are seen diversified in the living tree and the wood which forms the primary material of man's creative endeavour. The means of movement, the necessity of attack and defence, the holy object are mirrored in this three-fold evocation. The seventh section, 'Mabinog's Liturgy', moves to the theme of birth in a broader Celtic setting and combines the continuing incantatory mood of the poem with the repertoire of a *mabinog*, a poet embarking on his career, telling the *mabinogi*, the tale of the birth of Christ, but with many references that range farther afield (pp. 193 f.):

In the first month  
in the week of metamorphosis  
the fifth day past  
at about the sixth hour after  
                                the dusk of it  
toward the ebb-time  
                    in the median silences  
                                for a second time  
again in middle night-course  
                                he girds himself.  
Within doors, attended  
                    with lamps lighted.  
No hill-pastores lauding  
                    for Burning Babe  
                    for Shepherd-Bearer.  
Nor now far-duces star-night  
nor swaddlings now:  
his *praetexta* is long since cast.  
Is it the tinctured *picta*

he puts on?

Yes, and the flowered *palmata*

by anticipation:

this is 'his own raiment'.

Not *Lalla, lalla, lalla*

not rockings now

nor clovered breath for the health of him as under the straw'd  
crucks that baldachin'd in star-lit town where he was born,  
the maid's fair cave his dwelling.

The imagery of the Passion in this quotation is taken up again in the final section, linking in the double formula of 'Sherthursday and Venus Day' both religious and profane elements and showing the Arthurian context of Galahad's successful quest of the Holy Grail together with the inherited background of the Greco-Roman world-view.

The eight section titles focus brightly on the important moving forces of *The Anathemata*. They isolate aspects of the poet's enterprise, but at the same time no single aspect can be seen entirely separately. The sections are constantly interrelated, and motifs recur, sometimes amplified, sometimes allusively, often in a completely different setting, with the result that the whole work has a kind of circularity. This is seen most clearly in the imagery and signs of Christianity, especially in the extensive use of liturgical allusions and the very definitely liturgical flavour, linguistically and structurally, that the poem in general possesses. The first and last sections display this circularity with the emphasis in the beginning on ritual observance as a general attribute of man and concluding with the ramification of associations with Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. A progression is visible in the way that the ideas have been unfolded, but the underlying principles to which the poet is pointing remain essentially the same. As the medieval carol puts it, *Alpha es et O*, or, as the quoted folk-tale formula runs: 'It was a dark and stormy night, we sat by the calcined wall; it was said to the tale-teller, tell us a tale, and the tale ran thus: It was a dark and stormy night...' This circularity of composition reflects a profound sense of the unity and order of life such as was experienced above all in the Middle Ages. It symbolizes not only the inclusiveness of the ideas and images deployed, but also the concept of eternity. Just because of the rootedness of the imagery in the inheritance of the past there is a timeless quality about the whole work, and this is because the things referred to are seen both for their own

sake and *sub specie aeternitatis*. There is no blind historicism about *The Anathemata*: the past lives, it is part and parcel of the present. The deposits, as the author likes to call them, transcend their purely historical, objective sense and appeal to levels of meaning both higher and deeper than themselves.

*The Anathemata* is concerned with both diversity and order, and it is intensely preoccupied with the particular. There is a precision and deliberateness about its language that exactly merits being called 'chiselled'. The details of observation, juxtaposition and association are, however, not there merely for themselves, but express beyond that an intuitive, even mystical knowledge of the oneness of life. The described object, the fragmentary quotation, the liturgical mood point beyond themselves; they are the signs and symbols of a fundamental harmony and unity. In the words attributed to Christ in the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, 'Lift up the stone and there shalt thou find me: cleave the wood, and I am there.'

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## AGENDA

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HUGH MACDIARMID

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Kenneth Cox, Alexander Scott and others.

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EPOCH AND ARTIST

On pages 209-11 of *Epoch and Artist*, in a review of an Arthurian poem by Charles Williams, there is an X-ray percipient discussion of the need for *now-ness* in poem or painting if it is to have value:

What the artist lifts up must have a kind of transubstantiated actual-ness. Our images, not only our ideas, must be valid *now*.

It is one of the key passages in the book, the kind of frequent thing that makes *Epoch and Artist* a *vade mecum* for anyone who works at a making of any sort.

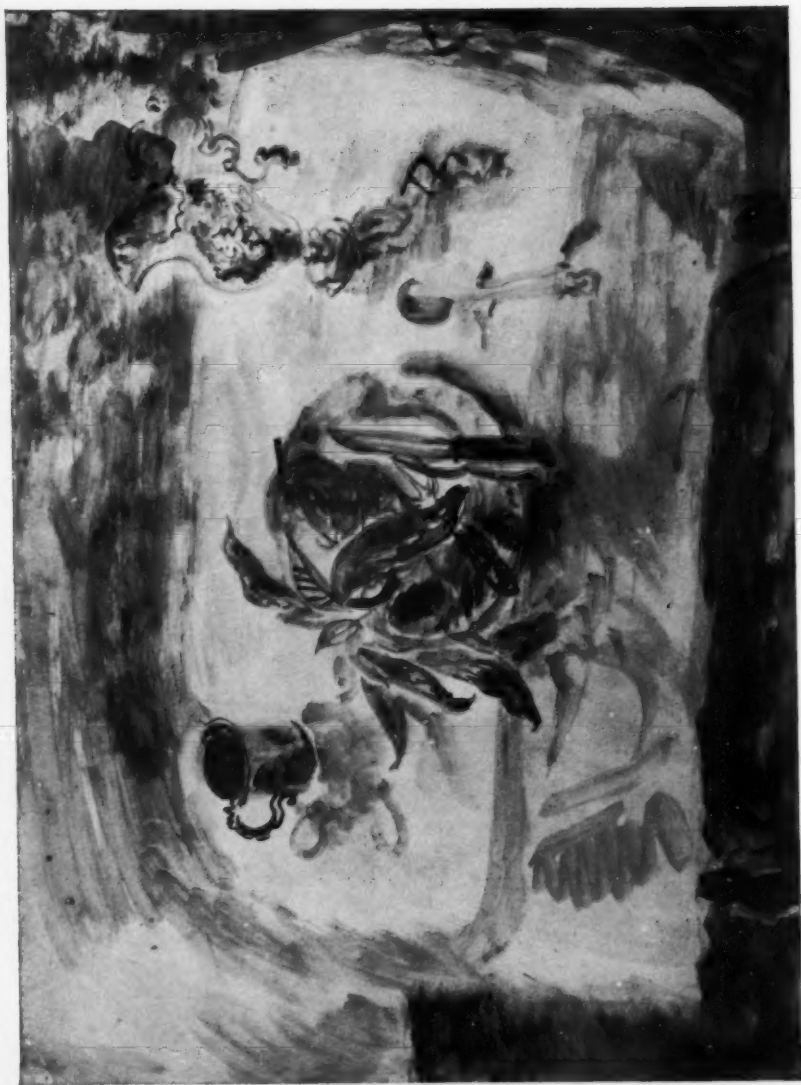
David Jones is agonisingly an artist of his time, of this century of war and technology and futurism and abandoned folk-memory. *Epoch and Artist* is a collection of essays, reviews, letters and articles written between 1937 and 1958. Yet in all sorts of context, discussion of sacrament, of Arthurian lore, of the work of Eric Gill or Christopher Smart, or in answer to criticism of the *Anathemata* the most frequent metaphors and prevailing imagery all come from the experience of infantry in the 1914-18 war. This book, almost as much as *In Parenthesis*, is a soldier's book, a soldier of 1916. That soldiering gave David Jones a view of himself and of his comrades in trench and sap-head, and so of the normal human male in Western Europe through most of its history.

It was the dominant practical experience of his life. It remains with him. He sees it still, evokes it. It is the source of his argot and of his rhetoric, moulds his philosophic explorations. Yet that war didn't go so much, or not directly, into his exhibited drawings and water-colours in the nineteen-twenties and thirties. One guesses that he may have been dissatisfied with whatever drawings did try to re-present his war experience. The soldier in him, with all the profound accumulations, had to find another mode of expression. And it was just so that he turned "to make a writing", to become poet.

There are people — and reviewers — who cannot make much of his poetry. *Epoch and Artist* can be a helpful introduction to it. Here, for example, is a paragraph from the essay on the Myth of Arthur:

Arthur's ship Prydwen of the *Spoils of Hades*, the galley of Artorius the *Comes*, this no longer rides the Mare Occidentale or the Fretum Gallicum, the pharos at Bononia is long exting-

ET EX PATRE NATVM  
ANTE OMNIA SÆCULA  
LVME N. DE LVMI NE  
GENITVM. NON FACTVM  
PER QVEM OMNIA FACTA SVNT  
ET. HOMO. FACTVS. EST  
PER HÆC SACRO SANCTA COMMERCIA  
IN ILLIVS. INVENTA MVR. FORMA  
IN QVO. TECVM. EST. NOSTRA. SVBSTANTIA



uished — but the trimmed and tarred coracles push out for 'the love of God' from western sinus and island to drift without chart or helm-control (like the open boat in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*) 'by adventure and by grace', as Malory would put it, to beach on the flats of estuaries, to be moored under the deserted harbour-moles, where signs of Roman anchorage show at low tide, and the disintegrating Roman iron corrodes and streaks tawny the crumbling Roman cement, where west wind and west tide prey on the carcass of Empire; or over-land between the 'army-paths', carried on back where the inland streams change level, to be tethered under bank in upland reaches — for the watermen of God must bring their rule to the evacuated, and to where the ancient hill-forts are being feverishly reconditioned for inter-necine war — for the long toil and dark winter of the West, that was, in fact, a bright birth-time.

It is printed as prose; it is part of a careful scholarly exposition; but the argument of the essay has at this paragraph flowered or taken wing into the rhythms, the pauses, the idiom of *The Anathemata*. And it is interesting evidence how unsought those rhythms and that idiom are, how they inhere in this author's vision and mode of memory. His linked memory; he reads his history from his dug-out in the trench.

Another quotation may bring out more explicitly how the poetry shapes itself for this 1916 soldier. This extract is from a broadcast talk on the Roman roads of Britain. It is too long to quote in full and I ask pardon for the cuts:

At Mass, supposing it is a Mass of the modern Roman Rite, we hear some words of the prayer: *Domine non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum*... and we may be moved to recall that these are the words of a warrant officer of the Roman army. True, they were no part of the rite until a thousand years after the last Roman soldier was dead, but that does not prevent us from recalling this most typic man who, you will remember, went on to say: 'For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say to this one, go and he goeth...'

So let us second to a unit stationed in Upper Britain this centurion of auxiliaries serving in the Tetrarchate of Galilee. And I would invite you to envisage with me this figure as transferred not only regimentally and geographically

but also temporarily; that is from early in the first to late in the fourth or early in the fifth century. I would like you to see him disposing some working-parties on a partly levelled road-site on rather high, open ground somewhere on the chalk of what is now southern England...

Some of you will retain memories of a variety of small sounds inseparable from the use of trenching implements... The blackthorn is out and the thrush sings, but though she is in April there are no English here. Beneath the starry, white-budded, black bough of the windy tree he sits on a pile of white rubble eyeing a work in progress. His rain-proof cloak is of fine-wove British goat-hair fabric in Silchester-dyed cockle-red; an export market product. But no one could say it wasn't regimental as to cut...

So we'll see him as he would fancy himself most; and which, in a vicarious and legatine fashion, is no whimsy, but the truth. So we'll see him in the sacred *murex*, the piled chalk-stones of the White Island for his curule chair. He's a Dafydd y Garreg Wen in Caesar's cloak. And as he directs the making of this particular section of road, we can hear him say to this one, *Vade* and to another *Veni* and to a third *fac hoc*...

It is worth while reading this whole passage of two pages slowly with much patience. Because, — unless one is hopelessly astray, — it lets us right through the looking-glass of Mr. Jones's art. Here you have our Lord's centurion, the Mass, Roman Britain, the English downs, the early Welsh, the 1916 infantry-man, all held together in one vision. More than that also, for the picture reaches further back and further out. It is the kind of syncretism you get in his picture of *Aphrodite in Aulis* where also all the centuries of Western man, from Greece to the infantry and tin hats and barbed wire of 1916, are held in a single sign. One gets the same mode again in the 1930 landscapes where birds and branches of trees and flowers and delicate china on a table or a page of music are all without perspective one thing on one plane. Like putting a meaning into Matisse.

Without history, no poetry. Without yesterdays galore and living, today has no life. The poet's job is to make us more aware of life richly meshed in complexities. To add a practical point, the key to Mr. Jones's poetry is in the nouns, especially the proper nouns. 'Poetry is a song of deeds' he says, and he is the poet of proper names. He loves more particularly the

names that travel and change, and by their changes tie up the centuries and are some clue to them. Most he loves them when they come from the worn West and yet carry echoes of the Roman Mediterranean world into which the West's Eastern religion was born. He loves the lore of semantics. The last paragraph of his letter, *Past and Present*, is a lovely exercise in the poetry of semantics. He loves James Joyce's puns because their play discovers affinities not previously caught, because it concertinas history; it does what Coleridge told us was the function of the imagination. It is doing the same thing as the drawings. The true sign annihilates perspective.

And so does the Mass. It needed perhaps this poet-painter to call our attention to the exciting visual beauty and relevance of the rubric: *Ambabus manibus accipit calicem*. It was this way that Mr. David Jones came into the Church. The central essay of this book, which many reviewers took to be the whole book, is not at all an essay in apologetics. But it is some sort of apologia. Many have stressed the uniqueness of Christian sacraments: Mr. Jones is concerned with their share of human normality. Every man is by his nature an artist. It is a dictum handed on to him by Eric Gill, but it is a truth that he knows and feels and could not live without; so that to come to the Sign that is itself the Reality it signifies is to come also to the supreme art Thing. The Mass concertinas all history and gives life itself, the whole lot of it, the right look.

DAVID JONES, HIEROPHANT

Despite the high opinion that David Jones's work enjoys among writers as distinguished as Eliot and Auden, he is probably better known as an artist than as a poet. He belongs to no school, and has not yet been classified. As David Jones is *sui genesis* it may help to place him by naming some of his admirations. It may briefly be said that he shares some of the ideas of Ruskin, Morris (and Eric Gill), greatly respects Hopkins, and seems much influenced by Eliot and Joyce. But few of David Jones's debts are literary and stylistic; his style is all his own. His chief reverence is for things rather than poets, and especially two things: the Catholic Church and the history of Britain. His work may be described as the effort of a Virgilian *pietas* to produce a synthetic myth of the two. He would take delight in Gregory the Great's instruction to Augustine in Canterbury not to destroy the *temenoi* of the Angles but to replace their pagan idols by the Cross of Christ.

As David Jones is not an immediately accessible writer—although *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata* can be read by the light of the author's prefaces and notes—*Epoch and Artist* may serve as a reconnaissance of his arcana. This collection of essays, radio talks and letters is divided by the editor into four parts, dealing respectively with Wales; the artist and the modern world; the heritage of Britain; and some individual artists (Smart, Eric Gill, Joyce). The most important essay in the collection is *Art and Sacrament*, the Preface to *The Anathemata* being a less formally inductive statement of the same position. David Jones has a centralized mind, and this essay may serve as a clue to the darker passages in his writing.

In brief, his argument is this: that as the Creation was a gratuitous act, freely performed, so the arts, both 'fine' and practical, are the activity in which human freedom of will is most properly and distinctively exercised. In the Willendorf Venus or at Lascaux we are for the first time confronted with a species whom we recognize, 'whose works follow them': *homo faber*. Art is a gratuitous, intransitive activity, beyond the mechanical skill of animals. The angels, as pure intelligences, have no things out of which to make signs. Art is religious; not in the church-furnishings sense, but in that it binds us back to our origins (*re-ligare*) by a re-presenting, an anamnesis. Art,



then, of its nature, is a religious activity which 'makes us man'; and it is necessarily sacramental in that it must use things as signs. The particulars of our environment are endowed with significance by their names: Hence, to close the argument, human arts, from boat-building, to strategy, to cooking, to architecture, are sacramental. David Jones illustrates this theory by a striking insight in his Preface to *The Anathemata*. He explains that his *anathemata*, his things set aside and offered up, his 'things laid up from other things', are also 'offerings of both persons and things, including those over which the minister is directed to say "... bless, ascribe to, ratify, make reasonable and acceptable."

'We note that he is not directed to say those words with reference to grapes and wheat, but with reference to things which have already passed under the jurisdiction of the muse, being themselves quasi-artefacts, made according to a *recta ratio* and involving the operation of several arts, as that of the mill, the kneading-board, the oven, the *torcular*, the vat.' The words of consecration, 'This is my body', transubstantiate bread and wine, the products of human artefacture. They thus ratify and show the way for what David Jones is trying to do in his *anathemata* and anamnesis: this metaphor is itself the effective agent of what it signifies.

*Epoch and Artist* contains other useful and curious essays, especially those on the matter of Britain and the Arthurian Legend. But we must proceed to *In Parenthesis*. 'This writing has to do with some things I saw, felt and was part of,' the author begins his preface. 'The period covered begins early in December 1915 and ends early in July 1916.' David Jones was a private in the Royal Welch Fusiliers (an infantry regiment in which both Ford Madox Ford and Robert Graves were officers, if I am not mistaken). The form of the book is a series of flashes presenting in aural and visual terms a platoon's arrival in France, going up to the front, entering trenches by night, at dawn 'stand-to', cleaning their rifles, sharing their provisions, relaxing in a café behind the lines, preparing for a major attack and finally taking part in this assault. The cast are Privates Ball ('01 Ball) and his comrades; but there are no 'characters' in the sense of a novel. In the exteriorized part of the book we are more reminded of a film montage or an artist's collage than a psychological or realist piece of fiction. All is impersonal: fragments of speech, words of command, muttering or conversation in the ranks, things seen, thought of, or trodden on are fitted together. The method

is peculiar to this book, and it is an effective one once the reader becomes accustomed to it. The focus is not inwards, and the mind and body to which these things happen are not those of an individual only, but rather those of any private soldier in these trenches. '01 Ball (at once John Ball of the Peasants' Revolt and David Jones and Everyman) is at the centre in some sequences, and especially in the final attack, in which his friend Lewis and many of the rest are killed. The 'story' is not of individual soldiers—it was not a war of individuals, a point which is made when at the end the wounded Ball leaves his rifle behind in no man's land. The book has value as a documentary on the life of an infantryman in the trenches—the life of the *men*, Cockney and Welsh, here recorded with a wonderful ear and eye for all the lore ingrained in common speech; and all done without reliance on the fashionable mystique of the knightly officer class and the uncomplaining men... but the documentary value is incidental. *In Parenthesis* has a depth of historical perspective and a richness of allusion which gives it another dimension. The war is seen instinctively against the background of previous British—not merely English—battles, beginning with Catraeth, where, as the first Welsh bard Aneirin sang in his lay *Y Gododdin*, 300 Welshmen were slain, all but three, by a huge force of Angles; Camlann, Arthur's last battle; Maldon; the personal combats in Malory; the wars of Henry V; and, of course, Roncesvalles—all are evoked explicitly or by a turn in a phrase. "Boniface once walked in Odin's wood"; no one but David Jones would choose to remember the British conversion of Germany in that way.

The shifting, mysterious background of the remote past is most strongly made present in the final section, when 'There did not seem a soul about' as the British troops 'go walking in the morning on the flat roof of the world' across no man's land. The companions are enumerated by their places of origin in London and Wales, and as they fall their names—Waste-bottom, Talacryn, Williams—are paralleled by a roll-call of 'those other who fructify the land':

like Tristram  
Lamorak de Galis  
Alisand le Orphelin  
Beaumains who was youngest  
or all of them in shaft-shade  
at strait Thermopylae  
or the sweet brothers Balin and Balan  
embraced beneath their single monument.

Jonathan my lovely one  
 on Gelboe mountain  
 and the young man Absalom.  
 White Hart transfixed in his dark lodge.  
 Peredur of steel arms  
 and he who with intention took grass of that field to be for  
 him the Species of Bread.  
 Taillefer the maker,  
 and on the same day,  
 thirty thousand other ranks.  
 And in the country of Béarn—Oliver  
 and all the rest—so many without memento  
 beneath the tumuli on the high hills  
 and under the harvest places.

David Jones notes: 'Not that Roncesvalles is in the Béarn country, but I associate it with Béarn because, once, looking from a window in Saliès-de-Béarn, I could see a gap in the hills, which my hostess told me was indeed the pass where Roland fell.' David Jones is interested in the living lore, not the historic fact; for it is the living lore which makes the historic (or unhistoric) fact significant. He is not seeing the war under some arbitrary personal symbolism: he is using spoken tradition, the ancient typologies, the Merlins who still groan under the stones of Wales. This is his distinctive contribution.

At length we arrive at *The Anathemata*. *In Parenthesis* has a familiar subject, and we may like it for the wrong reasons, because it is lent shape and emotion by its subject. It is also, perhaps, more of a formal success than *The Anathemata*, but in his second book David Jones is making an attempt infinitely more valuable: he is trying to roll back Merlin's stone, he is trying to make us understand in what sense it is that Arthur may come again, he is charming us into recognition of what for centuries we have been taught to make light of—the Matter of Britain.

He writes in the preface, "To the question: What is this writing about? I answer that it is about one's own 'thing', which *res* is unavoidably part and parcel of the Western Christian *res*, as inherited by a person whose perceptions are totally conditioned and limited by and dependent upon his being indigenous to this island. In this it is necessarily insular; within which insularity there are the further conditionings contingent upon his being a Londoner, of Welsh and English parentage, of Protestant upbringing, of Catholic subscription."

Before giving an inventory of David Jones's treasure house of *anathemata*, I would like to suggest why an unearthing of the British deposits in our racial memory is at this moment a labour of more than merely archaeological or antiquarian interest. The Revival of Learning, the imitation of polite literature, the growth of science, of positivism, and of 'scientific history' have conspired to make us forget our origins. History and literature as taught in English schools make a perfunctory bow in the direction of the Conquest and Geoffrey Chaucer, and only gather momentum with the Tudors and the emergence of England as a nation state. But 'what's under will come up'—and what's under are the Danes, the Angles and Saxons, the Romano-British, the Romans, the British themselves; and—according to Geoffrey of Monmouth and all subsequent chroniclers—the British descend from Brute, the grandson of Aeneas the Trojan (himself the son of Venus, daughter of Jove). All this—truth and true dream—is still there in Britain, as anyone landing at London Airport can see from the configuration of the fields. It is above and beneath pavements within the sound of Bow bells, and throughout the island, especially in its western and northern hills; and it still forms part of the life of the people and their speech. It has long been obvious that the heritage of English Renaissance, Reformation, Nation and Empire needs to be reintegrated with the older and broader traditions of Britain and of Europe. England has been living on capital, in more than one sense, for too long.

*The Anathemata* is the first long poem which draws on and attempts to integrate the locally relevant parts of the enormous body of knowledge that has been accumulated in this century in anthropology, archaeology, comparative mythology, religion and literature. Robert Graves's *The White Goddess*, A Grammar of Poetic Myth, was an attempt similar in its aims. Indeed, it has been noticeable that the interests of many of the best writers of today, in and outside of the arts, seem to converge on prehistory and the earliest periods of history. *The Anathemata* is one of the few poems of this century that have a more than literary interest. It is a work of integration of the past into our day; it might be said to be Orphic in its nature, and thus, to the reader, psychologically salutary. David Jones, rarely leaving his room at Harrow-on-the-Hill (not far from London Airport), has, as it were, traced the course of some of the winterbournes of our history, and shown that they can flow again in our time of drought. Like Joyce, to whom he owes so

much he obstinately works everything into relation with a central preoccupation—in his case that of religious anamnesis.

The Preface begins: "I have made a heap of all that I could find." So wrote Nennius or whoever composed the introductory matter to the *Historia Brittonum*. An old-fashioned 'analysis' of the contents of the book may prove useful. It has eight sections: 1, *Rite and Foretime* is a liturgical recalling of the prehistory of Europe, beginning with the Mass, as both meal and sacrifice. The hill of Troy; the birth of Aphrodite, patron of Thebes. Lascaux (Rachel Lévy, Jane Harrison). The Ice Age. The origin of the princely dynasties of Northern Wales in a movement in the late 4th century (under Roman auspices) of *foederati* (under Cunedda) from Southern Scotland. 2, *Middle Sea and Lear Sea* deals with Rome and Britain, Hector, Turnus, prototypes of Christ. The founding of the *urbs* (Rome, London). Athena at Olympia; Athena Polias. The navigation of Brute, the mythic sea-founder, to the shores of Pryten. Thalassocracy. 3, *Angle-Land* tells briefly the coming of the Angles; the North Sea; Nelson. In 4, *Redriff* a ship's master asks for a speedy repair-job, even if the work is hurried, at a Redriff mast, block and tackle yard in the Pool of London; and is refused by a master mast and block maker, (based on David Jones's maternal grandfather) in a litany of technical terms. 5, *The Lady of the Pool* is a long enquiring speculative monologue by a Cockney lavender-seller not unlike Anna Livia Plurabelle. The Lady, called Helen Monica is a compound of a water-side consoler of sailors and others, Santa Maria-sopra-Minerva, the Stella Maris and the two Helens (of Troy and of the invention of the Cross), and she implies the genesis and lore of the port of London while talking to her sailor lover. We hear of Mary, King Alfred, Flora Dea, Elen, Augusta Trinobantum, Redriff mast-pond, John Dee, of sacred ships, until, finally, the compass is boxed round to the Passion of Our Lord. 6, *Keel, Ram, Stauros* is a meditation on the fabrication of the keel of a ship and of the battering ram, types of the Cross. 7, *Mabinog's Liturgy* is a blending and fusing of archetypes—Gwenhwyvar, Selene, Helen and Athena—in the person of the Virgin. The Incarnation, Consecration, Nativity. The Last Day, the levelling of the hills. The three *mamau* (mothers) speak together. The three masses of Christmas at Rome. Finally, 8, *Sherthursdaye and Venus Day* is an anamnesis of the Crucifixion: the Christ Child; Peregur and the achieving of the Grail; *The Dream of the Rood*; the Mass.

He does what is done in many places  
 what he does other  
     he does after the mode  
 of what has always been done.  
 What did he do other  
     recumbent at the garnished supper?  
 What did he do yet other  
     riding the Axile Tree?

Such a summary cannot convey Jones's odd 'atmosphere' an atmosphere which is more noticeable than any individual stylistic quirks, of which indeed there are many. It is the atmosphere of a forest of romance in Malory or *Gawain and the Grene Knight*, dense and mysterious, full of the numinous and strange, with its brakes and laundes, boughs and starry flowers, hermits and white harts, streams, wells, lakes and island chapels. The work of David Jones is possessed of that quality of otherness which is the distinctive contribution of the *forestieri*, the *Wealas*, to 'English' literature, from the half-Celtic Elegies of Anglo-Saxon times onward. This quality is omnipresent, not only in the Arthurian sequences, but also in the Roman passages, full of words heavily used in their latin senses: donate, adjuvant, patient of, efficient, agent; the immanence is maintained, though sometimes the effort is palpable... One of the chief factors in creating this dream-texture is that the speaker is scarcely if ever named. In *In Parenthesis* 'he' could refer to both the enemy, the soldier, and God. In *The Anathemata*, 'he' refers to Christ and to the divinely-guided culture-heroes who come to our shores, 'she' to the Blessed Virgin Mary down through her pagan surrogates to the Lady of the Pool. The result is that one does not know who it is that is speaking. This atmosphere that shines behind the intaglio of phrase, suggesting always the patinations of time, of history as a spatial palimpsest, is perhaps David Jones's greatest gift.

The mediaeval feeling of the writing is intensified by the author's medieval attitude towards his material. David Jones regards the arts and anthropology much as the Fathers and commentators regarded the natural world and the Old Testament—as two complementary books of Revelation, full of analogies and prefigurings of Christ. His funneling mind runs easily to analogy in this symmetrical universe of mirrors, finding, like Hamlet, 'sermons in stones, books in the running brooks'. He treats etymology after the school of Isidore of Seville, as a moral science.

It is much easier to describe what *The Anathemata* sets out to do, how it does it, and where it fails in detail, than to estimate how much of it will last. David Jones's writings are peculiarly problematical, which in itself indicates that interest in them will not wear out easily. The chief problem is unfamiliarity; but on a third reading a new beauty begins to make itself felt. One may quibble at some of the idiosyncrasies of David Jones's style—its persistent liturgicality, for example. But this is only to say that, like all of us, he has the vices of his virtues. There is a certain puritanism in the English reader that has to be doubly convinced by Celtic verbalism. But such reservations must not obscure the magnitude and originality of the achievement. It is my opinion that merely to have put the long-lost matter of Britain in new relation with prehistory and later history, and to have re-presented it in an internally organic fashion is a feat which will not allow itself to be forgotten.

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## A G E N D A

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DAVID JONES  
"DOWN THE TRAVERSED HISTORY-PATHS"

My participating in this special number is a great honour which makes me more conscious than ever of the difficulty and richness of a subject which it may take one or two more generations to explore in its length, and breadth and depth. I reviewed *In Parenthesis* just thirty years ago<sup>1</sup> with an enthusiasm that has been fully confirmed by *The Anathemata*, so that today my tribute of admiration has grown into a certitude naturally calling forth words like "genius", or "a work of permanent value". This feeling is made all the stronger from the consensus of eminent judges, but it was achieved independently through an intense impregnation which, if it proves always the most rewarding approach to any work of art, seems to me the inevitable requisite in the case of a work compounded of stratified meanings.

I did not wait for T. S. Eliot's most wise and, on the whole, stimulating advice<sup>2</sup> to discover for myself that at least three readings of *The Anathemata* were necessary before its general significance could dawn on one's mind. After twice as many readings I am still very humbly aware of the complexity not so much of the main design as of the different levels of speech. What remains a stumbling-block for a foreigner is the subtle manipulation of words and phrases and their modulating effects, passing from terse, even elliptical poetry to familiar, conversational cadences, from sudden bursts of popular rhythm, including slang and puns, to recondite allusions to all sorts of lore. Although my list of queries still runs into pages and pages, I feel no inclination to impugn that *difficulty* which could be explained as "embarras de richesse", or better still as an inward necessity, arising as it does from the subject itself, certainly not from a wavering mind or an unsteady pen. The footnotes, profusely provided by the author, are so many proofs of his conscientious fight for clarity, of his patient suing for the reader's collaboration—so many-sided, so intricate, so essential are the intentions to be conveyed. To be sure these notes must be chewed and fully digested for a proper understanding of the text, but after that preparation, they are still to be relished for

<sup>1</sup> *Etudes Anglaises*, 1, 6, (November 1937), 545-546.

<sup>2</sup> *Dock Leaves*, A David Jones Number, Spring 1955.

themselves either as a sort of musical accompaniment or as a quaint gloss supplied by some devoted disciple. T. S. Eliot's notes to *The Waste Land* are an altogether different affair: they are merely utility notes; David Jones's notes look more like shoots or sproutings from his luxuriating imagination, richly stored with an intensely personal knowledge of books, the sort of knowledge which can never be described by the ugly dry word "erudition", as it consists in living words and images, such concrete details as lay dormant—*vide* John Livingston Lowes—in Coleridge's mind or as can be culled in their dewy freshness throughout the pages of Keats's *Letters*.

The concrete quality of the material is what appeals most to me in *The Anathemata*. That concreteness draws its unique intensity from the natural gift and special training which David Jones developed—untrammelled by any University conventions—as a painter and sculptor. As a writer he is still an artist in search of visual and tactile values, fully alive to the feel and colour, the weight and sounds of words; hence their disposition, grouping and spacing on the page which is meant to help us read the text as a musical score with all the right notations for its exact recitation and visualization. One of the most impressive passages in *The Anathemata*, about the mystic voyage of the *Mary*, aptly illustrates this double characteristic, what might be termed the symphonic and stereoscopic power of David Jones's particular medium. If the symphonic effects are nothing new in English poetry—as witness Shakespeare, Shelley, Swinburne, to mention only outstanding instances—the combination of both is, to the best of my knowledge, an unprecedented innovation, and the stereoscopic technique, as used in *The Anathemata*, though partly stemming from allegory, operates differently, by creating interrelated series of space and time planes. The foreground is made significant by what stands behind, but this hinterland, though evoked by the foreground, remains distinct from it; it is not made of lifeless, moral or intellectual elements as in an allegory, but of concrete details belonging to, or suggestive of other worlds, the world of liturgy and the world of art. This double or triple referential organization possesses all the rich deliberate efficiency of a fugue. It performs also the important function of linking together the different sections, by showing the same spiritual forces at work beneath the surface, i.e. the Christian *mythus*, running through the whole course of man's history from the farthest geological beginnings and made manifest, while traversing the successive cultural deposits, not by progress or improvement, but by accretions, by what David Jones

terms "continuings" or "inward continuities". It is curious to notice that in his essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), T. S. Eliot had expressed pretty much the same idea concerning the modern poet and had, in a way, anticipated *The Anathemata* in his reference to prehistory: "The poet must be aware that the mind of Europe, the mind of his own country — a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind — is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing *en route*, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen".<sup>1</sup> 'Historical thinking' as defined by T. S. Eliot in the same essay or by E. Cassirer, twenty-seven years later, in *An Essay on Man*, is the root principle of David Jones's writings. His dealings with the 'matière de Bretagne' or the 'Romanitas' must not be interpreted as a nostalgic, romantic return to the past; it is mere commonplace to say that since the Victorians and the Pre-Raphaelites, prehistory, along with geology, ethnography and anthropology have imposed a new attitude to the modern poet. David Jones is certainly, as a creative artist, the most interesting representative of that changed outlook which aims at encompassing, in a bold synthesis, the whole of man, not just man *sub specie aeternitatis* — although this is the ultimate concern of his vision — but man viewed from the focussing point of the present. In his notion of 'Now-ness', he joins hands again with E. Cassirer and T. S. Eliot and with James Joyce, about whom T. S. Eliot remarked that "in using myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him"<sup>2</sup>; a prophecy which has come true since the *mythical method*, as opposed to the *narrative method*, is the best description that can be given of the inward and outward structure, the interweaving pattern of *The Anathemata*; but where David Jones parts company with James Joyce and T. S. Eliot is on the application of the method. With him it is not just a technical device, it is the inevitable medium imposed on him by his conception of myth: "To conserve, to develop, to bring together, to make significant for the present what the past holds, without dilution or any deleting, but rather by understanding and transubstantiating the material, this is the function of myth."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Selected Essays*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> "Ulysses. Order and Myth," *The Dial*, LXXV, 5, (November 1923), 483.

<sup>3</sup> *Epoch and Artist*, p. 243.

The key-word is "transubstantiating" which, through a faith T. S. Eliot cannot exactly share, points to a religious operation, a sort of hermeneutics, exploring the historic deposits in order to uncover, beneath the encrustment of our so-called civilization, the permanency of sign and sacrament. The result of it all being that the metaphysics implied in David Jones's writings and their informing sacramental vision is far more comprehensive than either T. S. Eliot's or Malraux's (André Malraux is one of the few influences acknowledged by David Jones): T. S. Eliot remains too intellectual and literary and Malraux, though fully aware of the value of philosophical anthropology in the shaping of an artistic humanism rests content with a notion of "metamorphosis" which finally denies, not the presence, but certainly the permanent efficacy of any religious substance in the objects of the past.

The greatness of David Jones is that he holds "*les deux bouts de la chaîne*" conceiving man as he does as a link, unique in the world of being, between the visible and the invisible, whose activity in art is his incarnation of God, for God acts in him as creative imagination: "The imagination must work through what is known and known by a kind of touch. Like the Yggdrasil of northern myth, the roots must be in hard material though the leaves be conceptual and in the clouds. Otherwise we can have fancy but hardly imagination."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Epoch and Artist*, p. 244.

## LE REVE DU SIMPLE SOLDAT CLITUS

Traduit par Louis Bonnerot

Naguère sur le Limes Germanicus, j'ai fait un rêve: c'était après une action d'arrière-garde, une parmi beaucoup d'autres. Il s'agissait de nous dégager des dieux de ces parages, chose des plus courantes. Et, dans mon rêve, les fantômes étaient tous gros de corps et gros de proportions, qui se penchaient sur moi là où j'étais couché dans mon bivouac, tout contre Lugo. Lugo No. 59 sur la liste d'appel de notre manipule, donc Lugo, bien que son nomen complet, barbare, celte, fût Lugobelinos, un mot à vous emplir la bouche, pire que le tien: Oenomaus. Si je comprends bien t'es venu d'Arcadie porté par les vents — j'aurais pas une nymphe comme soeur? C'est bon! de Elis-Bas alors, c'est encore mieux, t'es un vrai Olympien, un sprinter plein de vie.

Moi, j' suis de l'Urbs — bien qu'élevé en campagnard.

Enfin, Celte ou non, Lugo se prenait pour quelqu'un d'important comme habitant de notre "Asile" et se considérait comme appartenant à Ilium et à l'Urbs autant que les Jumeaux. Puis-  
sent les Manes sacrées lui donner le repos — il fut atteint par une flèche perdue.

Ainsi donc, c'est là qu'était notre bivouac, après cinq jours de combat d'arrière-garde, et nous, nous formions le flanc gauche, avec les dieux de ces bois qui nous enserraient parmi les arbres de ces bois. Et l'endroit où nous étions couchés on aurait dit une sorte de péristyle, construit d'arbres élevés au sein profond du labyrinthe ombreux de ces bois. De longues enfilades d'arcades s'étendaient en toutes directions. Lisses et droits étaient les fûts de ces arbres sans aucune végétation basse mêlée au gazon entre chaque, si bien qu'on eût dit un pavement. C'était comme si les arches arrondies de nos basiliques allaient soudain se mettre en branle et le génie de chaque colonne tendre ses efforts et son élan pour rejoindre le numen de la colonne d'en face. Car tout est poussée et direction dans le labyrinthe de ces parages et chaque membre de chaque arbre, en se balançant, lutte pour s'assurer la domination, tout là-haut.







Et levant les yeux vers ces voûtes houleuses de ce vert fané que prend l'année mourante, percées de fentes d'un bleu qui maintenant s'assombrit, tachetées par le couchant de pourpre impériale — car c'était vers la sonnerie du soir — ce mélange de leurs branches en lutte semblait former des arcades pointues.

Eh bien! voilà une chose que tu ne vois pas en pierre, Oenomaus, une arcade pointue. Et je ne crois pas que tu le verras jamais.

Mais c'est une belle chose pour sûr qu'une arcade pointue faite de l'élan des branches de ce bois vivant.

Et des aigles regagnant leurs nids survolaient ces arcades venteuses et c'était là, de l'avis de certains, un signe de bon augure et Lugo de dire: Tiens, l'oiseau romain. Mais moi de dire: Lugo, raconte pas de bêtises! Ne parle pas comme un péquin qui a combiné une autre guerre. Et je m'endormis.

Et tandis que je dormais je fis un rêve, et dans mon rêve — pardi, ce n'est guère étonnant que j'aie rêvé de grands corps, étant donné la carrure fantastique et la longue membrure des Chauques et des Langobards et leurs pareils, ces grands bâtards aux cheveux de filasse. Ils ont le cou aussi laiteux et les boucles aussi dorées que n'importe quelle meretrix qui se détacherait en clair sur l'ombre d'une colonnade entre le Viminal et l'Esquilin, là-bas chez nous. Ces grosses têtes-carrées de couleur blonde étaient accrochées à notre flanc découvert depuis cinq jours. Et quand je dis cinq jours, j'entends les cinq derniers jours de ce combat d'arrière-garde. Il y avait cinq jours, cinq semaines, en vérité cinq mois que nous étions dans ces parages, cinq bons mois que nous étions dans ces parages avant de nous trouver plongés dans cette singulière pagaille.

J'étais donc couché là et c'est là que je rêvais; et dans mon rêve, tandis que je rêvais de ces vastes membrures il me sembla dans mon rêve que je n'étais plus étendu avec Lugo dans notre bivouac sous les arcades pointues, mais que je me trouvais maintenant dans mon rêve avec lui et très profondément endormi — car dans un rêve endormi vous pouvez rêver d'un homme endormi ou d'un homme qui veille, et c'est sans fin ces retours en arrière et ces surimpressions, dans tous ces rêves. Quoi qu'il en soit, dans ce rêve de ma façon voilà que maintenant nous étions étendus dans le Champ de Mars, où nous avait transportés le génie du rêve et c'est là que nous étions étendus — en dehors de l'Ara Pacis dans le Champ de Mars, du côté est, juste en dessous du mur extérieur du vestibule est, quand tu viens de la Voie flaminienne. C'est là que nous étions couchés dans mon rêve sous la blanche frise pentélique, lui maintenant endormi et moi éveillé

et la lune donnant en plein sur les membres souples et polis de la déesse de marbre et sur les plis ciselés de sa linea de marbre et sur les zéphyrs pleins d'entrain qui l'assistent, mêlée d'ombre sur les animaux dociles, lumineuse sur les jumeaux tendus par l'effort. C'est pris sur le vif! As-tu vu, de tes yeux vu l'Ara Pacis, compagnon? Quand tu entres, par la Porte flaminienne? C'est d'une belle exécution tout ce travail en relief, entre les pilastres, mais particulièrement celui à gauche de la Terra Mater, particulièrement sous la pleine lune des Ides d'Avril quand on sacrifie, en son nom, sous sa lune, les bêtes bovines qui à cette époque ont des flancs pesants, et telle était la date précise d'après mon calendrier de rêve — ça n'a pas de fin la précision et l'exactitude de ces données de rêve. Ainsi donc, dans mon rêve, c'était la pleine lune de la Fordicidia, et point une autre, qui brillait de tout son éclat sur le pentélique ouvrage.

Cette sorte d'oeuvre prend sous la lune un bon relief; il y a quelque chose de merveilleux dans la façon dont est conçue cette sorte d'oeuvre et voilà une besogne où tu serais un fameux balourd, Oenomaus, en travail de maçonnerie. Mais d'oeuvre plus belle jamais je n'en ai vu au clair de lune et c'était là une chose que je n'aurais point vue dans le cours ordinaire des choses, mais dans ces rêves les destins arrangent des rencontres sans fin. Des corps pesants voguent par les airs parfaitement à l'aise dans ces rêves, et c'est sans fin les unions que ces rêves endormis peuvent prêter aux choses, tout à fait séparées dans la veille-de-jour.

Et c'est ainsi que moi, Simple Soldat Clitus, en la première année de mon service, endormi au bivouac tout contre mon copain — nous étions des troupiers mal dégourdis du dernier contingent — postés pour la garde des flancs, détachés de la meilleure partie de notre unité, dégoûtés, arrachés à la douceur de nos foyers, à cent miliaria au-delà des murailles du monde — à cent et plus étions-nous de nos arrière-trains dans l'estuaire: nous avions nos bases là-haut à Lugdunum à l'embouchure du fleuve, en contournant bien au-delà du Détroit Gaulois, à mi-chemin de Thulé — pauvres orphelins qu'on était de la Mère des Cités là-haut dans le Bois de Teutberg, au déclin de l'année, c'est par privilège que le génie du sommeil nous montra la gestatrix de chacun de nous, représentée en marbre, sous sa propre lune à son jour propre et particulier à la porte de la cité au carême de l'année.

Cette lumière lunaire de ma nuit de rêve semblait verser sa clarté sur les zéphyrs de marbre représentés là, vaguant à califourchon sur cygne ou dauphin pour signifier les eaux jumelles du monde, et celles de la mer et celles en amont, étroites et larges, tous les

biefs et les réseaux marins que notre Auguste Jupitérien a clôturées, pour notre santé perpétuelle, elle brillait aussi sur les épis penchés des tiges de froment en marbre et sur les fruits amoncelés, sur le boeuf paisible, sur la brebis, en train de paître, et sur toutes ces manifestations de fertilité de l'oeuvre sculptée en marbre, et sur Elle, installée au centre avec sa *palla* de marbre rejetée, en arrière, dégageant les marbres de son front afin de montrer ses tresses de marbre, et ses fruits jumeaux, qui semblaient grimper sur son calme giron, en sa qualité de Mère de nous tous: car c'est de ses profondes entrailles que nous provenons et vers son étreinte que nous retournons.

Deux fois aussi grande et deux fois aussi naturelle elle semblait sous cette lune — as-tu jamais remarqué cela, Oenomaus? Ces lunes font toujours paraître les choses deux fois aussi grandes et ce fut le cas de mon rêve-de-lune, tout était agrandi, vois-tu, ce mur extérieur de l'enceinte n'a pas plus de dix-huit pieds de dénivellation depuis la corniche, j'en suis sûr, mais à la lumière de ma lune il semblait de trente bons pieds en regardant d'en bas depuis notre bivouac et les formes sculptées proportionnellement grandes et les ombres très profondes et les contours soulignés par la lumière arrondis et fermes. C'était un beau spectacle, et qui plus est, et maintenant que nous en arrivons au point important, sortant, se dégageant du marbre immobile, un spectacle plus ample du fait qu'elle apparaissait graduellement sous la lune, et qu'elle-même se pencha dans mon rêve tandis qu'avec légèreté ses enfants de marbre semblaient encore suspendus dans cette atmosphère de marbre, son apparence de mouvement, car je ne voyais aucun déplacement, paraissait ne point déranger les formes placides qui étaient représentées là et voilà de quoi intriguer les pensées de veille, mais c'est sans fin les possibilités de ces rêves. C'est du moins ainsi qu'elle *parut* se pencher, détachée en quelque sorte de l'ouvrage en relief et perçue de façon plus corporelle, pourtant toujours en son élément statique de pierre sans pourtant déranger l'équilibre de la maçonnerie. Et c'est ainsi qu'elle-même gravement s'inclina et sembla tendre ses vastes membres vers moi et mon copain dans notre bivouac, lui endormi et moi éveillé, et les grands fantômes incertains de mon rêve qui se penchaient au-dessus de moi là-haut dans le Teutberg devenaient concrets en les membres harmonieux de Tellus Notre Mère, se penchant vivante au mur oriental au-dessous de la corniche et le monde tout entier semblait en paix au fond des plis de sa stola tandis qu'elle se penchait au-dessus de notre bivouac et touchait presque nos draps de bivouac de ses vigoureux doigts de marbre.

Et maintenant, dans mes pensées de rêve et en vertu de la vision ou par le flux et reflux imprévisible de ces marées de rêve que réglemente Oceanus, il sembla que moi et Lugo nous étions attirés dans cette paix, était-ce en un corps de marbre, je ne saurais le dire, était-ce comme Dioscures de chair et de sang, je ne puis le dire — le génie du rêve lui le sait — mais nous semblions être de ceux qui méritaient sa large étreinte pour avoir, à ce qu'il semblait à mes pensées de rêve, monté la Garde de Minuit à la traverse du Mur. Il semblait que sûrement maintenant à jamais moi et mon compagnon d'armes serions à jamais dans le giron de Tellus, en haut du mur, à l'intérieur des portes, emeriti pour l'éternité, comme attestation perpétuelle de Roma, et de ses fils. Et alors nous serions spectateurs des novices suant chaque jour à l'exercice, là-bas sur le Champ de Mars, et — ce qui révèle la fâcheuse perversion de notre nature — cette pensée aussitôt me fit rire, dernier rire de rêve.

Et maintenant (c'est-à-dire dans le *maintenant* de mon rêve) de son côté de notre marbre gestatoire, Lugo cria un nom: Modron! il cria et alors, — mais à voix basse pourtant: Porth Annwfn. Quelque agnomen mystérieux et arcané mais qui pour mes révélations de rêve avait la lucidité du clair de lune et signifiait clairement: Porte de l'Elysée.

Or je ne connaissais aucun mot du jargon de Lugo, et c'était, après tout, mon rêve à moi et non le sien. Eh bien, Oenomaus, qu'est-ce que tu y comprends à tout ça? Mais j'ai ceci encore à ajouter: quand ils l'ont touché j'étais tout près de lui dans la traverse — et ce n'était pas un rêve — et il cria bien fort le même nom rituel, mais pas la dernière partie, car il eut son compte avant de pouvoir la prononcer.

Ainsi donc, comme je me représente les choses, son Modron et notre Matrone ne font qu'un, et son *porth* c'est le sombre portail au-delà duquel réside Proserpine depuis la chute des feuilles jusqu'au temps des crocus.

Mais maintenant à ce changement de mon sommeil, à cette troisième transformation de la vision, à cette révélation finale du génie du rêve, à la fin du cycle — la Porte de Corne presque entr'ouverte — voilà que les plis ciselés de sa stola qui avaient semblé si blancs au clair de lune, étaient maintenant, en un clin d'oeil, devenus les plis de trame grossière, froissés à l'endroit du giron dans les tabliers tout pareils dont se servent les femmes et qui font partie de l'accoutrement de leur métier, dans les régions où je suis né. Et maintenant le mouton de marbre en train de paître tout près du boeuf de marbre, était maintenant, au tournant

de mon rêve, l'agnelle identique qu'on prenait et bridait pour la fête de Lucina en Mars, par un matin de vent et de pluie, quand je n'étais pas plus grand que ça.

C'était toujours un grand jour dans notre région que la fête de Junon, mais précisément par ce matin frileux de sa fête, à la première des dix Calendes de l'année Romuléenne, je jouais aux Grecs et aux Troyens avec mon frère, derrière notre étable, tout en-dessous de l'auvent, tu connais :

Vent de Mars, froide pluie  
Les marmots, les vieux os  
Seraient mieux à l'abri,

quand on est venu pour l'emmener, et c'est avec des beuglements que je réclamaï cette agnelle — je m'en souviens bien — et c'est de même qu'il me *sembla* beugler maintenant, comme un taureau, à la conclusion de mon rêve. Mais il se trouva que mon beuglement de rêve fut le hurlement du vieux Brasso, faisant l'appel des noms et des matricules pour le Quart de Minuit. C'est sans fin les métamorphoses de ces rêves.

Brasso? Brasso Olenius de la Cohorte No. 1? Le Primus Pilus Prior?

Eh, oui, bien sûr, qui d'autre que Brasso? Qui d'autre que Brasso tirerait un homme d'un pareil rêve? Bien sûr qu'il était là-haut avec nous, il a toujours été avec nous, il sera toujours avec nous, tant qu'il y aura l'un d'entre nous pour en garder le souvenir. Que tu sois une demi-section dans un abri avancé ou une demi-cohorte au fond d'une réserve de légion, il y a toujours un Brasso pour jacter, un homme bardé-de-faits pour renverser et fragmenter cette unité rêvée et ces conjonctions bienheureuses, bien sûr que ce vieux Brasso était là-haut — et il avait d'ailleurs gravi des échelons, — plus les pertes sont élevées, plus on monte en grade. C'est là qu'il était, parmi les *Primi Ordines* au cours de la nuit, et son avancement il le doit surtout au coup dur de cette bagarre; et voilà pourquoi, après cette bagarre nous l'avons appelé Brasso Germanicus, et après nous l'avons appelé Brasso tout court, et c'est pourquoi on l'a toujours appelé Brasso depuis. Voilà, si ça t'intéresse, un peu de la petite histoire du régiment et tu aurais dû en savoir aussi long que ça après ton année de service, aux prochaines calendes de Maius, Oenomaus.

Pardi, on peut compter sur Brasso pour se persuader qu'il était "bleu" sous le divin Julius. Car ces hommes "porte-faits", Oenomaus, ont leurs hallucinations, n'oublie pas cela, en vérité leurs illusions en remontreraient à un poète en sa mansarde — seulement il y a quelque chose de calculé dans les rêves mêmes de Brasso.

Certains disent qu'il est né en jactant, en grande tenue de parade,  
sa badine sous son petit bras de chérubin, l'année où Marius  
réorganisa les manipules et en expert en soumit tous les détails  
à un plan régulier, celui de la cohorte.

Et il y a des gens qui disent  
que sa mère l'enfanta  
in Anno Urbis Conditae  
l'année qui mesure  
toutes années.

Ils disent qu'elle  
avait des ventricules de bronze  
des ubera de fer  
et qu'à la fin de chaque vigilia  
elle lui donnait de son nectar de louve  
et cela régimentairement.  
Et qu'une salpinx à l'embouchure tartrée  
claironnait, mais non pressée par des lèvres mortelles  
son farouche taratantara étrurien  
à ces heures réglementaires  
avec précision.

Et c'est, disent-ils, pourquoi  
dans la vraie, concrète  
et présente réalité  
nous autres, en fait  
(à ces quatre heures réglementaires précisément)  
nous relevons la garde.

Avec l'accompagnement de la belle cacophonie de  
ces sacrés buccinateurs aux favoris de lanciers  
quand ils se mettent à lancer leurs appels cuivrés

Si son visage charmant est violacé c'est pour s'assortir au plumet de  
Légat — et ça ne vient pas d'un petit verre de gnole réglementaire  
— c'est la pigmentation des siècles!

Il fait partie du personnel permanent, si jamais arriviste le fut.

Mais quand la Seconde Pléiade verra sa lumière baisser et que  
Flora s'effeuillera et que l'Urbs tombera, tu sauras que Brasso a  
dû tomber auparavant — le premier à la périphérie de nous autres,  
puis au centre même:

Voilà qui serait chose difficile à rêver, Oenomaus:

Dea Roma, Flora Dea  
meretrix ou nutricula du monde  
sans Brasso.

Il y a certaines choses  
dont on ne peut venir à bout  
même dans ces rêves.



THE WORK IN PROGRESS

Admirers of *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata* desire to know if there are other poems by David Jones. There are. At the end of his essay "Art and Sacrament," David Jones himself quotes a poem of seventeen lines which he, characteristically, calls "fragments of a fragment abandoned in c. 1938." As its date indicates, this small poem stands between the publication of *In Parenthesis* (1937) and the composition of the material (1938-1945) upon which David Jones has drawn to make both *The Anathemata* (1952) and the half-dozen poems of his work-in-progress (1955-1965).

There may be more poems by David Jones. I judge the texts of some of his dedicatory epigrams and occasional inscriptions to be poems, at least when the words printed or lettered are more than a simple quotation of a single passage written by someone other than David Jones. Whether the Welsh, Latin, and English words are of his own making or the quotation from, imitation of, allusion to, words by others are of his own mixing, the words are of his own composing. I am not alone in regarding some of the epigrams and inscriptions as poems. In his fine essay "David Jones: A Reconnaissance," René Hague quotes from the text of one of the inscriptions and calls it "an unpublished poem."<sup>1</sup> As T. S. Eliot finally included "Defense of the Islands" among his complete poems, even though he originally considered the lines "a collection of captions" for an art exhibition, so, perhaps, David Jones will eventually select from the body of his epigrams and inscriptions, especially those made during the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties, a gathering of short pieces. Although the extraction of the texts from their pattern of colour in the spacing of letter-shapes in the inscriptions is like tearing plants out by their roots, what remains intact are poems which show David Jones to be as much a master of poetic compactness as *The*

<sup>1</sup> René Hague, "David Jones: A Reconnaissance," *The Twentieth Century*, CLXVIII (July 1960), 36. Reprinted in this issue.



*Anathemata* and the work-in-progress show him to be a master of poetic elaboration.<sup>1</sup>

David Jones has the 'catholic imagination'. He does not want to lose or discard anything, not even what is alien to him. Like Dante, he includes and condemns the alien elements rather than excludes them. He desires not to reject things previously experienced, even if they are barbed and prickly with negativities. The objects of his first love were the Christian story and London and Wales. One can imagine that he might have been content with them all his days. But he suffered the drastic dislocation or wrenching of two major journeys outside of the British Isles. He volunteered for the first when he was around twenty and went as a soldier to France. He unwillingly undertook the second when he was around forty and went as a convalescent to Palestine (like Melville in 1856-57). The first inducted him into adulthood, history, and the mystery of the military craft and fraternity. The second displayed not only the relics of the Holy Land in the midst of the ruins of defeated empires but also the contemporary life-style of the British Empire. Both of them, no doubt, led him through the Slough of Despond. The first both stunned and stirred his imagination so deeply that it took a decade for his response to find its expression in *In Parenthesis*. The second seemed not to touch his imagination at all, because of his illness, and yet it made a profound impression; in half a decade it found its expression in the passages about Palestine in *The Anathemata*. Both of them together find their further expression in the work-in-progress for it is, in many passages, about soldiers and about the Holy Land. Every poet sings his loves, but the poet with the 'catholic imagination' includes the elements of laming dislocation when he celebrates his love. By incorporating indirect expression of disruptive

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<sup>1</sup> Reproductions of inscriptions by David Jones illustrate the following writings:

Braybrooke, Neville. "David Jones: Painter and Poet," *Apollo*, LXXXVII, No. 12 (February 1963), 127-130 (2 inscriptions).  
Gray, Nicolette. "David Jones," *Signature*, New series no. 8 (1949), 46-56 (2 inscriptions).

Gray, Nicolette. "David Jones and the Art of Lettering," *Motif*, VII (Summer 1961), 69-80 (8 inscriptions).

Jones, David. *The Anathemata: Fragments of an Attempted Writing*. London: Faber and Faber, 1952 (also New York: Chilmark Press, 1963), (7 inscriptions).

Jones, David. *Epoch and Artist: Selected Writings*. Edited by Harmon Grisewood. London: Faber and Faber, 1959 (also New York: Chilmark Press, 1964), (1 inscription).

experiences within the poems, David Jones prevents the loss of parts of his life and he enriches the poems.

As the poet with the 'catholic' imagination<sup>1</sup> does not want to reject things previously experienced, so he does not want to reject things previously made just because he has to exclude them from a work-being-made for aesthetic-thematic reasons. He tries to include them in the next work; (indeed he tries to include as many elements as he can in each new work and to integrate them ever more intricately).

David Jones accomplishes such radical existential and literary salvage in the work-in-progress. He indicated the possibility of another long poem in the "Preface" to *The Anathemata*. In making *The Anathemata* out of the material of an earlier writing, he had to discard parts of it (as well as to add parts to it). He wrote, "Should it prove possible I hope to make, from this excluded material, a continuation, or Part II of *The Anathemata*."<sup>1</sup> His terms now need revision. *The Anathemata* is complete in itself. It is too shapely (in a serpentine Celtic-modernist manner) to permit the appending of other material, no matter how deep the affinity of the one to the other. Although the work-in-progress does issue from the same imagination as *The Anathemata*, it is not the second half or the sequel of the earlier poem. Like its peer, it is complete in itself.

A shift, a swing, a switch in perspective demonstrates that the work-in-progress is distinct from its predecessors even though in one sense, as we shall see, it also continues, combines, and complicates their themes and styles. In *In Parenthesis* the British past is present to soldiers in France during World War I and in *The Anathemata* the British past with a number of its contributing factors is present to a worshipper at Mass in Britain during World War II. In the work-in-progress our own cosmopolitan present is present by analogy to both Roman soldiers in Palestine and Celtic villagers in Britain at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus. In *The Anathemata*, the British Isles are geographically central; Palestine is peripheral. In the work-in-progress, Palestine is central; the British Isles are peripheral, they represent the Western limit of empire and the edge of the earth. There are more than chronological and geographical reversals of perspective. In *The Anathemata* there is a careful balance between the birth and the death of Jesus. The one is not mentioned without the other. In the work-in-progress, however, there is only the death of Jesus. In *The Anathemata*,

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<sup>1</sup> P. 15, footnote 1.

we overhear the melody and harmony of memorable feminine voices (whether divine, mythological, human). In the work-in-progress, we overhear only masculine talk (although the feminine voices are silent, the feminine principle is not absent; soldiers and villagers both honour the earth mother, if by different names). By these differences, the work-in-progress is distinguished from *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*.

The work-in-progress is more accessible to a first reading than *The Anathemata* exactly because the slow-spoken Roman soldiers are easier to locate historically than the brilliant female talkers and the other speakers of its immediate predecessor.

The fiction of the work-in-progress (the centre and circumference of the Roman world) articulates three things at once: historical verisimilitude (the first century A.D.), retrospective irony (the subsequent understanding of the Church that Rome, in executing Jesus, was ancillary—like handmaiden Mary—to the fulfillment of mankind, but did not know that it was), and modern analogy (the twentieth century A.D.).

The crucifixion of Jesus is not mentioned in the first four poems of the work-in-progress, yet it is present in each of them by indirect reference, for David Jones arranges statements about the death of fertility deities and the performance of sacrifices (both very much a part of the Roman world) in such a way that they suggest the unnamed Jesus as the Son of God who redeems mankind. In *The Wall* we read,

They crane their civvy necks half  
out their civvy suits to bait the maimed king in his  
tinctured vesture, the dying *tegernos* of the wasted  
*landa* well webbed in our marbled parlour...

and in *The Tribune's Visitation*,

Some Judy-show  
to make the flowers grow  
the April mocked man  
crowned and cloaked  
I suppose...

and in *The Tutelar of the Place*,

Gathering all things in, twining each bruised stem to  
the swaying trellis of the dance, the dance about the  
sawn lode-stake on the hill where the hidden stillness  
is at the core of struggle,

the dance

around the green lode-tree on far fair-height where the secret guerdons hang and the bright prizes nod, where sits the queen *im Rosenhage* eating the honey-cake, where the king sits, counting-out his man-geld, rhyming the audits of all the world-holdings.

and in none of these is the explicit subject of Jesus-on-the-way-to-his-death or the-cross-as-the-hinge-on-which-human-destiny-turns. The crucifixion with its mankind-ransoming and Rome-transmuting ramifications is not mentioned and yet is established as a silent measure of all that appears in the poems. David Jones sees the crucifixion as the fulfilment of what the death of deities and the performances of sacrifices anticipated and yearned for, but fell short of, and did not reach.<sup>1</sup>

In the fifth poem, *The Fatigue*, the crucifixion and the related matter of how soldiers are selected to carry out such an execution constitute the poem. The death of Jesus is not presented naturalistically or realistically, but abstractly and ikonically. The details of the execution are treated liturgically, the action of a priest and the passion of a victim. The fifth poem dramatizes what has been suggested in the first four poems. Rome, as represented by its soldiers, does not know what it is doing. It ignorantly assists in subverting or undermining itself (yet, at the same time in transforming itself). It lends a hand in releasing a transvaluation of values. Rome gives way to Jerusalem as the centre of peoples. Rome unites peoples by the impersonal uniformity of army and bureaucracy. But in the new vortex of values, as Teilhard de Chardin says, "union differentiates." Rome can only threaten to obliterate the culture of the Celtic village in Britain at the limits of the empire. But the cult that

<sup>1</sup> The implicit but unspoken reminder of Christ crucified in the quotation from *The Tutor of the Place* is a pagan vision of the cosmic axis which Christian poets and theologians later adapted to interpret the universal significance of the cross as the pivot of redemption; the implicit but unspoken reminder of Christ crucified in *The Dream of Private Clitus* is the use of language which echoes that of the Apostle Paul. A soldier who has a sense of divine care and permanent security from a vision, in sleep, of the earth mother says about his metaphysical status, "whether in a marble body I cannot tell, if as Dioscuri of flesh and blood, I can't say—the genius of the dream knows" echoes rather closely II Corinthians 12:2-3. The rhetorical similarity emphasizes both a likeness and a difference. Both the soldier and the apostle enjoy a vision of, and communion with, divine being, yet to be lapped and tucked-in, as it were, by the goddess has another quality than to be 'in Christ.'

makes the death-on-the-cross its oblation comes not to destroy but to fulfill. And what it will do for the Celtic village, it will do for Rome itself. At the end of the fourth poem, *The Dream of Private Clitus*, the speaker is unable to imagine a Rome which is not sustained by military discipline and might. But the Rome that speaks with spiritual and moral authority to the earth is derived from, and sustained by, the death-on-the-cross.

If the soteriological event is present in the work-in-progress primarily as allusion and retrospective irony, our own time is present primarily as anticipatory analogy. In *The Wall* we get a forecast of a world of commerce, one vast consumer market, under the image of the first-century Roman world, in which crossing seas and entering far lands for trading, rather than for conquest, seems a come-down from military glory and betrayal of their god-given destiny. An ordinary soldier asks a question.

hallow the chosen womb	Did the empyreal fires to tabernacle founders of emporia?
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Later, he formulates the same matter as a report on what others are saying.

...they used to say we marched for the Strider the common father of the Roman people, the father of all in our walk of life, by whose very name you're called ...

but now they say the Quirinal Mars turns out to be no god of war but of armed peace. Now they say we march for kind Irene, who crooks her rounded elbow for little Plutus, the gold-getter, and they say that sacred brat has a future ...

In *The Tutelar of the Place* and *The Fatigue* we get a forecast of a world of bureaucracy, impersonal and powerful. And in *The Fatigue* we get a prediction of our own jerrybuilt synthetic environment:

in the adapted wing the ply-partitions cubicle the marble spaces and the utile fittings plug the gilt volutes and the night rota is tacked to the fluted pilaster.

The poems, without addressing the subject directly, leave the reader in a position to see our own world judged by its similarities to a tyrannical and repressive Roman world which destroyed and betrayed its own traditional values. The poems also leave the reader in a position to see these traditional values, good as far as they went (rooted in locality, they did not embrace the whole earth, in contrast to the deracinated impulse to empire,<sup>1</sup> which, longing to embrace the whole earth, reduced what it could get its arms around to sameness rather than savored its variety), judged by the Christian faith which unites impulses to embrace the whole earth and to value differences.

Something should be said briefly about the relationship of the parts in the work-in-progress. Besides, as we have seen, contrasting emergent commercial greed with original virtues, *The Wall* introduces the wall as a recurrent theme. It contains and maintains the world. In the end, the wall becomes the model for the army. Homer compares them: "helmets and shields were packed together, like the squared stones of a wall." (*The Iliad*, XVI, translated by W. H. D. Rouse); David Jones compares them too:

the walls of the world	That's how we keep
maniple by maniple	sector by sub-sector
	man by man
	each man as mans the wall
is as each squared, dressed stone	fronting the wall but one way
	according to the run of the wall.
( <i>The Fatigue</i> )	

At the same time, David Jones echoes Vergil: "and each man did his tour of duty, watching that part of their front which he was detailed to guard." (*The Aeneid*, IX) Lewis Mumford argues that the first machine was not a mechanical invention but a human organization. It was in the army and the slave work-gang that the uniform, standardized, replaceable, rationalized unit developed. David Jones gives the same sense of the person-repressing discipline of the army and, simultaneously, a sense of the decency of the duty-doing ordinary soldier.

<sup>1</sup> "To Romans I set no boundary in space or time. I have granted them dominion, and it has no end... the nation which wears the toga, the Roman nation, masters of the world. My decree is made." *The Aeneid*, I (translated by W. F. Jackson Knight).



The poem central to the work-in-progress — the poem dialectically related to the largest number of other poems — is not *The Fatigue*, even though it meditates the crucifixion, but *The Tutelar of the Place*. It presents the impact that empire makes on Celtic villagers that come under its rule. They are devoted to the local and the customary. They know the earth mother as a parochial goddess, "Great-Jill-of-the-tump-that-bare-me," in contrast to the speaker of *The Dream of Private Clitus* who knows the earth mother, under a sculpted image of her in the Capitol of empire, as the one who gathers into one — as she gathers them to herself — all the heterogeneous peoples within the empire. The villagers are past-regarding, in contrast to the speaker of *The Tribune's Visitation* who announces a new age in which persons are future-oriented and cosmopolitan, rather than parochial; and illusionless, rather than fantasy-projecting. To the villagers Rome is a nightmare, the anti-Christ of The Apocalypse. Their major defense against it is the daydream that the ruthlessly efficient bureaucracy will carelessly overlook them. Their last defense is the death-wish. Polar to the daydream and the death-wish of the villagers is the illusionlessness and ecstatic nihilism of the speaker of *The Tribune's Visitation*. At right angles to their daydream and death-wish is the vision of the night-dream which communicates a sense of immortal membership in eternal Rome to the speaker of *The Dream of Private Clitus* (the same speaker observes that even the ambition of the opportunistic realist is a — ruthless and lethal — kind of dream). Finally, the bureaucracy which appears to the villagers to be automatic and impersonal is seen in its interior workings in *The Fatigue* to do things both arbitrarily, or by whim, and methodically.

The longest and boldest of the poems in the work-in-progress is *The Tribune's Visitation*. It is a triumph of the 'catholic imagination.' In it David Jones creates a speaker who expresses precisely the position and vision which he most opposes, most fears and resists. The tribune announces that mankind has come of age and needs neither gods nor memories of childhood and adolescence to perform the task of imposing the empire on the earth. Faith and nostalgia are infantile and retrogressive. Mankind is now mature and progressive. A grim and gleeful knowledge of reality is all mankind needs to harden it for its task.

The shortest and most tangential of the poems in the work-in-progress is *The Hunt*. Indeed, it is not clear that it belongs to the work-in-progress. It is clear that David Jones made it out of the material of the early writing from which both *The Anathemata* and the work-in-progress have been drawn. But no note



labels it as belonging to the work-in-progress. I am, therefore, tentative in my statements about it. I would suggest that *The Hunt* bears the same relation to *The Fatigue* as "he descended into hell" does to "he was crucified, dead, and buried," David Jones of Harrow writes another version of the Harrowing-of-Hell, the mythological motif which was so popular in both the Anglo-Saxon and the Medieval phases of English literature. But he presents the story typologically rather than directly. He uses the boar-hunt from "Culhwch and Olwen," the most intricate of the tales in *The Mabinogion*, to recount the victorious invasion of the realm of the dead as the hidden work of the Christ in the death-on-the-cross. David Jones has long seen Arthur as a 'type' of Jesus. So he wrote thirty years ago in the notes to *In Parenthesis*:

We who know Arthur through Romance literature incline to think that the Norman-French genius has woven for us the majestic story of the Table and the Cup from some meagre traditions associated with a Roman-British leader, who possibly existed historically as a sort of local *dux bel-lorum* . . . But there is evidence shining through considerable obscurity of a native identification far more solemn and significant than the Romancers dreamed of, and belonging to true, immemorial religion — an Arthur the Protector of the Land, the Leader, the Saviour, the Lord of Order carrying a raid into the place of Chaos.<sup>1</sup>

The Roman world conducts its impressive and terrifying business. A man who is priest and sacrifice dies. His act opens upon another dimension of being and what it accomplishes in that dimension is suggested by a myth of a Christic Arthur who directs and leads the liberating boar-hunt. The Roman world, ignoring the extra-terrestrial dimension, does not recognize the crucifixion as divine action to overcome the negativities of human existence or as the start of a community which would eventually prove empire-permeating and transforming. It is as though the hunt takes place along a frontier which soldiers cannot guard, a dimension of being to which all of us are exposed and against which the mundane dimensions of existence do not immure us. Rome cannot wall out God.

Although there are changes in emphasis and perspective from *The Anathemata* to the work-in-progress, there is continuity. Both are long poems in verses and prose. Both are the speeches

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 200-201.

of personae, personae who enjoy circumstantial historical verisimilitude as their masks but who speak an awareness that transcends their fictional station and individuality. They are representative or archetypal figures. Therefore their speech is heterogeneous: polyglot, erudite, coined, colloquial. It is allusive. David Jones is a Vergilian-modernist writer. Making a new work is in part reformulating previously assimilated older literature. Let me give an oversimple and hypothetical example. David Jones reads about the death of Antores: "Unluckily was he felled by a wound not meant for him; and he looked at the sky, and, dying, remembered the Argos which he loved." (*The Aeneid*, X) David Jones reads about memorials to the legions in Palestine: "Sometimes it is a native of Germany or of Gaul, drafted here for service on the Arabian border, whose epitaph tells how he died thinking of his fatherland: '...born(?) and a lover of his country, having come from Germany and died in the Agrippian troop, was taken back to his own.'" (George Adam Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, 625-626). These two quotations combine and interact to form a new expression:

No grave Teuton of the Agrippian *ala* rides to death on stifling marl-banks, where malarial Jordan falls to the Dead Meer, thinking of broad salubrious Rhine, more tenderly than do I think of muddled Tiber. (*The Tribune's Visitation*)

There is stylistic and formal continuity between *The Anathemata* and the work-in-progress. There is also complication such as a handler of fabric gets when he folds cloth and wads it to double its thickness. For example, the woods at the end of *In Parenthesis* reappear in the course of *The Hunt* but in the latter poem the woods are thicker and the lines more succinct. David Jones is a Vergilian-modernist poet with a 'catholic imagination': he loses nothing; he alters everything.

During World War II David Jones made a Christmas card which shows Rome as the Mother of the West; she is the bristling, shaggy she-wolf giving suck (as though to Romulus and Remus) to the lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. His work-in-progress reflects the same complex play of attitudes toward Rome. Rome had simple military virtues. Rome added to these ambiguous administrative and organizational virtues (we are still shaped by the Roman layout of districts, roads, and walls). Rome added to these police state vices. Rome executed Jesus of Nazareth, and yet Rome supplied the gospel

of the crucified Christ excellent media of pirate-and-robber-free routes for far-reaching, rapid communication. Rome was one great pirate or robber, and yet Rome, like shaggy John the Baptist, prepared the way for the Love who, in repudiating grabbing, brought Rome to judgment. So Rome contributes to the life of Him who supercedes Rome. The 'catholic imagination' of David Jones articulates such complicated and contradictory attitudes towards Rome in his present work-in-progress, the peer of *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*.

*Note:* The present essay is an account of the (so-far) six poems of the work-in-progress: *The Wall*, *The Tribune's Visitation*, *The Tutelar of the Place*, *The Dream of Private Clitus*, *The Fatigue*, and *The Hunt*.<sup>1</sup> Their approximately 1550 lines already constitute a work one-fourth the length of *The Anathemata*.

<sup>1</sup> The poems from the work-in-progress are listed in the order of their publication.

"The Wall," *Poetry*, LXXXVII, No. 2 (November 1955), 68-74 (also in *An Anthology of Modern Verse, 1940-1960*, edited by Elizabeth Jennings. London: Methuen and Co., 1961). Reprinted in this issue.

"The Tribune's Visitation," *The Listener*, 22 May 1958, 443-445 (also broadcast by B.B.C., reviewed by K. W. Gransden, *The Listener*, 8 May 1958, 791).

"The Tutelar of the Place," *Poetry* (Chicago), XCVII, No. 4 (January 1961), 203-209 (also in *Agenda*, II, Nos. 11-12 (March-April, 1963), 3-7; also broadcast by the Welsh Service of B.B.C., according to René Hague in "David Jones: A Reconnaissance"; the poem won the \$100-Levinson prize from *Poetry*). Reprinted in this issue.

"The Dream of Private Clitus," *Art and Literature*, I (March 1964), 9-17 (also broadcast by B.B.C., reviewed by Michael Swan, *The Listener*, 7 September 1961, 364). Reprinted in this issue.

"The Hunt," *Agenda*, IV, No. 1 (April-May 1965), 3-6. Reprinted in this issue.

*The Fatigue*. Cambridge: Privately printed by Will and Sebastian Carter at Rampant Lions Press, 1965 (also broadcast by B.B.C.).

DAVID JONES  
AND THE ART OF LETTERING

David Jones is certainly the most original and serious artist making lettering in England today. Yet his work in this field is almost unknown to the public. And whereas most lettering is a particularly public art (even if frequently anonymous), being done for advertisements of all sorts, book jackets, notices, even to a lesser degree also when on tombstones, memorials and such like, with David Jones this is a private art. His inscriptions are made for his own pleasure, for his friends, for Christmas cards, only in special cases for book jackets (his own books and one other) or for reproduction, as for the *Symposium for T. S. Eliot* (but this is still the reproduction of an original, not a design made for reproduction). Can any art be altogether private? It may originate in such private reasons and bear their stamp, but in so far as it is art it is bound to have repercussions, to mark the minds of those who see it and to change their vision. Because it is so original, and so serious, work like that of David Jones is apt to be a leaven, with incalculable effects. And it is also apt to be imitated—possibly with quite opposite effects—because this is essentially not the sort of lettering from which letter-forms or idiosyncrasies of arrangement can be borrowed. To do so is to separate odd pieces from a living whole, and so kill them. Or possibly of course to give them a quite new life, but in that case the origin is fortuitous. It might as well have been the original Roman and medieval sources from which David Jones himself has derived the multifarious letter-forms which he uses; none of them is new.

For in all these inscriptions the starting point and the driving force is a personal reaction to the meaning of the text inscribed, which results in a unique piece of painting, in which, as in any other sort of painting, each constituent part is only itself in relation to the whole. There is therefore no repetition, each one is different, and the more one studies them the more one is aware of this. The most revealing way in which to study them is chronological; in the last fifteen years there has been a great widening of scope.

In 1922, after his service in the first war, and three years return to art school, David Jones went to live at Ditchling in the community in which Eric Gill was the dominant personality. There he saw lettering being produced as living art and a straightforward normal activity. It was not however one that he took up himself: he has never cut an inscription in stone. Wood-engraving was the craft which he learnt, and in the course of that he engraved some lettering, for instance in his illustrations to *Gulliver's Travels*, published in 1925. An early essay into making a lettered thing is a small Madonna and Child carved in box wood lettered round Our Lady's halo and all over the back, made in 1924. It shows the beginning and the end of the relationship with Gill. Through Gill came no doubt the idea of including lettering at all, but the treatment is quite different. Here the text has not been laid out, it just begins at the top and goes on to the end, going round the corner at the bottom in order to fit in the whole: the relationship between individual letters is established as they come up, one after the other, to find their place among their peers; and fundamentally this remains his method of approach today. The cutting is unskilled and uneven in depth, giving it a quality which though no doubt partly involuntary was consonant with the artist's intention. Gill's speed and facility in letter-cutting would have been useless, if not indeed absolutely inhibiting. The letter forms also are not studied but, one feels, the shapes which came to mind in the context—out of a quite small and unstudied repertory. Later the repertory grows and changes, always, I would guess, in some connection with words and their meanings and usages and associations.

David Jones dates the real beginning of his lettering work to the years after 1927-8. There were two line-engraved versions of the text *accendat in nobis Dominus ignem sui amoris et flammam aeternae charitatis* made in 1929 for the *Ancient Mariner* published by Douglas Cleverdon (of which one only appeared in the book); but I do not know any painted inscriptions before the forties. In the last twenty-five years there have been a great series; perhaps about sixty.

The majority of these, and almost all the earlier ones, are in Latin. The later ones introduce a good deal of Welsh, others are in Anglo-Saxon or partly in some form of early English (the Welsh is sometimes medieval Welsh), and in some there are phrases in Greek. The only one that I recall in contemporary English is a quotation from James Joyce. This use of

languages one or other of which is obscure to most people may seem baffling; it immediately impedes the normal reaction to any sort of writing, which is to read, and to concentrate instantaneously on the matter of the reading. That however is of course to pass over the essence of these works, or of any piece of writing which is a work of art. The essence is that they are formal arrangements, visual expression, physical things. Which is why so much of the best calligraphy, particularly in the East where it has been practised so much more continuously, is virtually illegible. Not, I should imagine, that the oriental calligrapher sets out to be illegible, or David Jones to be obscure; in both cases, as in all art, the object is communication, but not through the reading of words. The words are the starting point for the artist, the germ of his idea and the key to his mood; their literal forms are the raw materials out of which his design is worked. But for the spectator they are like the iconography of a picture; knowledge of it can deepen our understanding, preoccupation with it prevents us from seeing the picture at all.

For David Jones the words are particularly important because he is also a poet, and one with a constant sense of the presence of the past, so that words carry with them, and between them, all sorts of emotional evocations. This is well shown in an early inscription made round about 1940. The text is from Virgil's *Aeneid*, Book 2, line 277, the description of the defeated Hector which for the artist evoked the prophetic description of the Passion of Our Lord, in Isaiah (53 v. 1-12). The inscription itself has the same frailty. The brush strokes are unsure, the letter forms are sometimes unbeautiful, awkward and tentative and given a certain pathos by a sideways movement of some of the letters, which is counter-balanced by the cohesion of the whole complex, just as that of the diminishing size of the cramped last lines is counter-balanced by the stoic dignity of the Latin alphabet and the Latin words. The contrast is very striking between this and those inscriptions—a considerable number of the very best—which reflect with luminous clarity and repose the message of the Roman Church. The plate opposite p. 112 is one example of these—dating from about 1953. It juxtaposes a passage from the Nicene creed with part of the *secret* prayer in the Christmas Midnight Mass. For all the joyful and a romantic element occasionally evident, these inscriptions share the monumental quality which is so characteristic of the plate opposite p. 112. Yet how different this is from the



straightforward well laid out inscription—to which it approximates more than any other of David Jones's work. The perfection of letter-form is based on variety, each letter is a separate creation, not a repetition. One notes too that one can follow each one as it recurs. M, so strong at the end of the first line, almost always with square apices, but these varying in height and in the angle of diagonal which follows. N, the final stroke of which moves almost like a balance through the pattern; providing the one romantic accent at *lumen*. The very beautiful Os, always a crucial letter in every free piece of lettering. E, the round form immediately counterbalanced in the first line by the very strong and prosaic form at three, so wide and with emphatic equal arms. One can follow each letter of the alphabet and see its rationale each time it recurs.

The close, slightly irregular spacing between the lines is vital because the relationships between the letters work in all directions, and are worked out in absolute detail. This inscription, and most of those of the last five or six years, are not just letters painted on paper. The background as well as the letters is painted, and in the making of it both are worked and repainted, some passages perhaps completely readjusted, so that the whole has a quality of texture and personal feeling and physical entity which cannot be conveyed by the direct impression on paper of a reproduction.

Different again is a group of inscriptions made rather earlier. These are all done on backgrounds of mixed coloured crayon and watercolour. They are short, large-lettered, wide-spaced. Examples are *Roma Caput Orbis* and *Northmens Thing made southfolks place*, both reproduced in *The Anathemata*. There is also one beginning *Optima Goreu Musa Awen* (alternate Latin and Welsh), reproduced in an article which I wrote in *Signature*, No. 8, 1949, and an epitaph to Arthur taken from Malory (Bk. 21, Ch. 7) of about 1949: *Hic jacet Arturus quondam Rex Rexque futurus*, which is reproduced in *Motif*, No. 7, 1961. In the last of these the choice of letterforms characterizes the whole inscription with its As without cross-bars and strangely stepping Rs. These forms are all actually taken (out of a great range) from dark age inscriptions (suitable enough for Arthur's tombstone). But the point is, of course, the pattern which they make, which is so carefully balanced, and the mood inherent in the square, open shapes together.

Very different is the mood of the later, pronouncedly Welsh and usually black and greenish-yellow coloured inscriptions.



An example dating from 1959 is given opposite p. 48. There is also a very beautiful one of this sort reproduced in *Wales through the Ages*, edited by A. J. Roderick; another is the frontispiece to the author's *Epoch and Artist* and a fourth a wonderful great unpublished piece transcribing a passage from *The Anathemata*. These are mostly large, crowded, like pages from some magnificent manuscript, incorporating all sorts of strange letters. The letters echo the text and the sound. In the example illustrated some are for Welsh sounds, like Ll and dd; the different script of 'haubergeon' echoes the medieval trapping which is a reference to a passage in Langland. The piece also includes bits of Tennyson and Propertius. There are many other new forms, varieties of G, Greek Y, M and W with loops, B with a rounded join to the stem and upper bowl, and various forms of ugly Rs. Here is a certain return to the romantic tragic mood of the Aeneid inscription of 1940. But there can be no return to those unsure brush strokes, so here instead there is the irregular, almost halting movement, the strange curls and sudden angularities that make up something much more mature and important, but lack the poignant directness of the very early piece.

Most of these inscriptions, and many of the earlier ones, have lines running up the side and round, or partly round, the edge. This is, I think, a characteristic of great significance. It usually complements the main text, often in a different language and less monumental script, and so adds variety to the pattern. The piece of about 1956 (illustrated opposite p. 17) is an example where it is particularly important. In this inscription colour also plays a lively part, with yellow and mauve most memorable. It is more balanced and serene than the long Welsh inscriptions and yet more vivid, with its variety of language and alphabet, than the strictly liturgical texts, expressing the poetry and movement of the great hymn *Vexilla Regis* in contrast to austere ecclesiastical prose.

In a class by itself is the great inscription of about 1955, in Latin and Welsh, which, unlike any of the others, was originally made with the idea of being enlarged as a painting on the wall of a chapel. Actually this was never done. But there is little difficulty in seeing it painted on the white wall of some bare church, looking as magnificent as the great mosaic inscription in Santa Sabina in Rome. (I can see others too as great tapestries, where the texture of the weave would serve to translate the quality of the painting into a different scale and material). In this inscription the tension between the curl, native to the Celtic

ethos and the sober Latin which translates it—which is also poetry—is particularly strong and precise. The cramming together of the text, and the empty spaces between, effect a great concentration. The meaning of the colour changes is here too very purposeful. Always connected with the actual word painted, it is here used to tie together the translated words, as well as to emphasize the crucial ones.

How does this lettering stand in relation to that of other artists who do this sort of work? In the last century or so there has been an enormous development in commercial lettering so that it has become an important popular art. One recognises that the work of even the most important artists working in this field is poles apart from this work of David Jones. Where does the difference lie? Not just in quality, for I would be very loathe to say that the work of an artist such as Grignani was less important. Nor is it just a difference in approach, though this is fundamental. For David Jones the text transcribed is vital, it is something in which he is emotionally involved, which controls the way the whole work evolves. For the commercial artist the text is normally trivial, he is concerned immediately with the design, with the use of letters, what he can make out of them. And here is another difference. For David Jones the letters are something given, forms in the mind involved from the beginning in the sort of words which they spell out. He has enlarged and perhaps modified (not much) the forms which he uses, but always in connection with words and from some known source, from a Latin inscription or Welsh text. He would be quite incapable of painting an inscription in a given alphabet, say sans serif or even orthodox Roman. It would not be an exercise relevant to his work. The professional letterer is on the other hand concerned with types of letter and their implication as design and also their association to himself and his spectator—there is also of course the whole advertising element which I do not propose to discuss. And also with the letter as a pictorial element, the heavy rectangles of a sans, or a three-dimensional letter, elements which can be made into all sorts of new and exciting patterns. In this sense commercial lettering is full of discoveries, and the work of David Jones is always the same. The one may create pictorial-letter compositions of infinite variety and sight poems of every school, whereas the other, since he is a poet, creates sight poetry which is always his own.

There are however other sorts of lettering artists with whom his work is more easily comparable. In Western art these inscriptions are certainly very near to the great pages of lettering in manuscripts, particularly the great opening pages to the Gospels in Carolingian manuscripts. The pages in Insular manuscripts like the Lindisfarne Gospels or the Book of Kells are better known, but have a quite different organic dynamism. The Carolingian pages, in contrast, retain the gravity of the classical letter-forms; like David Jones's inscriptions, the way in which they are drawn and organised into unity (usually with one or two great letters dominating the page) is done with an imaginative power comparable to the immense import of the words transcribed. One thinks also of the other poet-painter William Blake, who engraved plates for his poems so that they should be visually and verbally one. But his lettering is after all surprisingly dull. Even in *America*, the most interesting of the prophetic books, there is little life in the text. His preoccupation was with weaving his drawing among the blocks of text, not in making the shape of each word embody its poetic meaning. Much nearer in its approach is the very remarkable lettering of Schmidt Rottluff, one of the members of the expressionist group of *Die Brücke*. This artist did some very interesting lettering, mostly woodcut, of which there is a good collection in the Victoria & Albert Museum. His subject matter was usually about as far as one could imagine from David Jones's liturgical poems; but it was approached in the same way. The raw ploughed up lines are essentially involved in the shapes which they make, which spell out the artist's message in passionate crudity.

Finally, an obvious comparison is with the great German calligrapher Rudolf Koch. Koch was a professional and a type designer, interested in letter forms for their own sake. But he could also put into a piece of writing a passion and seriousness comparable to that of David Jones. It is not irrelevant that to both men words and letters are the historic medium of the Christian message. Almost all Koch's finest writing is also of religious texts. He was above all a penman, using a thick, square nib to build up much closer, but still very free, textures of lettering. There is in the Klingspor museum at Offenbach a particularly fine piece in the shape of a great cross, densely packed with the words of the Gospel. If his writing is more spontaneous, the result of superb mastery, while that of David Jones is the result of infinite pains and working, that is a difference in technique. The quality of both is of the same order.

## THE VISUAL ART OF DAVID JONES

Being asked to write about the visual aspects of David Jones's work I feel I can best do this by quoting with slight alteration out of an article I wrote for *Horizon* in 1945 when I was very much involved in such things. I would write the same again today if I were able.

David Jones is probably the best water colorist in Britain today and certainly the best engraver. His touch with reality, as much as in any living artist I know goes back to that absolute which is the unchanging reality underlying the changing actuality of the world which at clear moments our quickest apprehensions see.

For a long time his pictures may seem to the observer muddled, childish and often tortured, but as they are lived with they will, I think, surprise that same observer by their real comprehension of a living world. He paints a picture entitled "Cows" and at first there are no cows—it is a surface of pale colours, a mist, unfocussed. Then as a proper focus is obtained the picture springs into life—his cows become tremendously cows; in innumerable ways the artist has caught the essence of their being and the movement of the space between them has a strange aliveness. His field is no ordinary field, and yet it is an ordinary field, the usual which holds always the unusual. It is a field at all times and in all times; a place of animals, a place subject to night and day, to dew on the grass and to bird-song. Monet painted his haystack a dozen times, each time for a different light; Jones paints all the lights in the same picture. The Cubists have a variable perspective point, Jones has a variable time point. Such things are details; what is of real importance is that the artist is aware and sensible to the things represented in his pictures. I remember an anecdote in connection with his painting of trees which illustrates this. He was staying at Rock Hall in Northumberland and had gone to his room to paint the trees of the park, seen from his window. They looked like cabbages—a great green mass of endless foliage. How could anyone paint them. Then almost in a rage he cried "But they are trees—trees—trees—they *must* make a picture", and in an agony of realization, of reaching to the actual and thrilling treelife, he found an expression in paint. This wrestling to achieve expression is, of course not unusual since every work of art is the victory out of struggle. I am reminded of El Greco

and I sometimes think that David Jones in his very British way, has some affinity with El Greco. At the age of twenty four he was profoundly moved by Greco's "Agony" which was at that time acquired by the National Gallery in London.

.....  
His awareness of the life of animals and of trees and of the subtleties of darkness and light is very clearly emphasized in the variety and detail of many engravings made in 1927, and it is of course only our own ability to respond to these things which will enable us to perceive what the artist himself had already seen and experienced; thus bringing to the event of seeing a picture some understanding of what went to make the picture. There is in the Deluge engravings a continuity in the processions of animals, so that although only very few are shown it is easy to imagine that, sooner or later, all the animals in the world will appear. This is because the artist, instead of thinking photographically of a particular moment, certain animals stepping into the Ark, thought of the whole process of gathering all animals into shelter. It is this comprehensive view which brings such startling liveliness to his water colours. Perhaps I can come more closely to this by thinking of one in particular. "Cat in an Armchair", reveals much of Jones' attitude to life, his awareness of surface confusion and his ability to canalize this confusion into essential Order. In this picture to begin with there is indoors and outdoors—the quiet peacefulness and fundamental shelter of a house looking onto the world. The outside penetrates the inside, yet the inside remains an interior; the trees seen through the window, springing so naturally from their natural soil could never by any stretch of imagination live on the near side of the window; from which it can be seen that for all the sameness pervading the picture there *is* a difference. Jones has no need to define it with the precision of an Academician, nor would he do so, for indoors and outdoors, town and country, are not so grossly different; an accident has changed their aspect. So recently trees grew where now a cat sleeps in the shelter of an armchair. Windows and walls are, to a certain extent an abstract idea, as the surrealists have endeavoured to manifest. I have lived in a room which edged a busy street full of movement and bustling lorries. But for the glass of the window and the thin courses of the wall, I should all the time have watched that no vehicle side-tracked over the breakfast table. Yet, with this protection, which is in reality no protection, so proved by a bus going through the garden wall which continued that of my room, I sat in total peacefulness and com-

plete unawareness of the outside world, as though I had been in the heart of the country. The window and the wall in Jones' picture retain that sense of substance being insubstantial. The Academician would have made a conflict between his glass and his no glass—his bricks and his air. He would have needed to hold tightly to the convention of these things in order to convey the shelter of indoors; but David Jones can fuse the two and still retain his shelter and also the less limited openness of the outside. His curtains, too, have their own particular nature; they blow in the wind, they are a barrier against the light, they can enclose the room from an outside gaze and shut off the outside from the inside; yet there is no change, for the outside is still close touching the inside. They are made of thread, fine almost as air, which by the subtle process of the loom, gives them substance—but for all that substance the artist does not forget their essential delicacy. His consciousness of the actual life and nature of all that he draws is intense. The cat, for instance, is not of the same nature as the chair. The chair is of wood and has indeed some affinity with the trees outside, but the sap no longer rises; the wood has been cut to conform to a certain shape, it is quiescent. Not so the cat, for all his sleeping he is intensely alive, almost quivering in anticipation of alarm, his feet so forceful and so violent are suspended movement and vitality. Potential alertness is in every line of this cat which sleeps so peacefully until disturbed by our thought. But the chair remains impassive for all our reasoning. Surely *this* is drawing, but I have heard it said by the pundits that David Jones can't draw. They said it of a watercolour he did of Lourdes, and I remember once passing through Lourdes in a train, not knowing I was there, and at once I knew where I was because of the picture. The whole atmospheric proportions were the same, the tempo, if I might so call it, of river and buildings and mountains was the tempo of the picture, and yet there was everywhere a visual difference so different as to be almost unbelievable that it was the same place. Now that years have passed since then, I can no longer, even visually, distinguish the Jones picture from the town of Lourdes. It fits it like a glove the hand.

There is a rare aliveness in the portraits . . . more than other portraits of today they hold the continuity of a life and vision of their own time. In his "Human Being", drawn from himself in a mirror, though never intended as a self-portrait, there remains the feeling of a personality; of someone sensitive to an outside



world, material and spiritual, of someone with a strange force which comes, not out of the strength of his body, but from the strength of his intention; eyes which collect things inwardly, a body, still yet alert, and fingers which are sensitive instruments at his command.

In 1929 he did a series of engravings for the *Ancient Mariner*. A pictorial illustration which is at the same time a work of art in itself, is difficult; but when it illustrates so vital an expression as the *Ancient Mariner* or the *Morte d'Arthur*, this transposing of one medium into terms of another becomes rare indeed, for the engraver must have an effectual response to what the poet has written and in his illustration present it with new vitality. In this series David Jones has achieved success. His pictures are no crude rendering of the story, nor do they in any way encroach upon the story. They have a life of their nature, but which lies so closely in sympathy with the poem that it becomes a vibrant commentary.

"The Bride hath paced into the hall  
Red as a rose is she".

The old man in the corner detaining the wedding guest; the others—so festive with their feathered hats and frilled clothes. It is a fantastic and lovely decoration which does not hide but amplifies this event, this almost daily event, of being a Bride. It is the Bride eternal, and I know of no wedding scene which conveys better the pageantry of this occasion.

Another of the series is the death of the Albatross—the falling of an overwhelming disaster, which parallels Melville's amazing description: "A regal, feathery thing of unspotted whiteness... at intervals it arched forth its vast archangel's wings, as if to embrace some holy ark. Wondrous flutterings and throbbings shook it. Though bodily unharmed, it uttered cries, as some king's ghost in supernatural distress. Through its inexpressible strange eyes, methought I peeped to secrets not below the heavens... the white thing was so white, its wings so wide and in those forever exiled waters, I had lost the miserable warping memories of traditions and of towns."

David Jones, in attempting to define some of the things necessary to a good artist, has spoken of "a certain affection for the intimate creatureliness of things—a care for, an appreciation of the particular genius of places, men, trees, animals and yet withal a pervading sense of metamorphosis and mutability. That trees are men walking, that words 'bind and loose material things'."

In all David Jones' work is a sense of change, of movement



—life perpetual in its ever varied development. It finds kinship in Paul Claudel's "Satin Slipper" for which he made a drawing... Paul Claudel says in his note to the reader: "Ideas from one end of the world to another are catching fire like stubble"; and again "The trees all over the world are different, but it is the same wind a-blowing. I, the painter, have drawn the picture whose subject is everything." That's it—to make a picture whose subject is everything; and Jones has always this in mind and in no way neglects local accuracy.

In his painting of briars and flowers called "Thorn-Cup", he speaks of these same things in pictorial form rather than in words. His skies are full of other skies, his birds sing the songs of all birds. Teapots and cups are emblematic of the meeting together of people, the breaking of bread as it were; his compotiere is almost the Sacred Graal, the cup of communion held as it is in thorns, impossible to dissociate from the crown of thorns; flowers are not portraits of particular flowers but the idea of flowers, their delicacy and persistence.

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There hang in the Kettle's Yard Collection, Cambridge, two later works by David Jones, 1950 and '48 whose outward subjects are Flowers and Trees, whose inward subject is of course the mystery of life itself. At a first glance the 1950 painting presents an opaque surface, scratched and weathered, a few Marguerite Daisies, here and there a touch of cornflower blue, and unassertive single dahlias, brick red. There is a confusion, an all over mixing common to the anonymity of all general impressions. Then in that confusion there stands out a great goblet holding a spread scattering of flowers; the goblet is of crystal—hard and brittle, in which water lies and in that water stems of flowers, a refracted light breaking their continuity but exposing their strength and substance. The contours of the goblet's bowl are suggested rather than drawn, a mingling of air, of glass, of water curving to the pedestal and base of solid glass.

Now is no muddle or ambiguity but almost the actual shining forth of the Holy Graal.

On either side are smaller upright goblets, they are empty but enriched by the falling of flowers about them, by passages of light caught from the windows against which they stand, the window openers themselves making hard patterns in the picture's surface and emphasising the general truth that in the artist's hand all is grist to the making of beauty, the conventional "ugliness" of a window opener and the conventional "beauty" of a

flower; each contributing equally to the unity of the whole.

The Trinity, the Holy Graal, the outside world seen through the windows, the inside world surrounded yet unimprisoned, an anathemata of God's beauty to God its maker.

It is the alert awareness of the interrelation of body, mind and spirit which makes of David Jones' visual expression a touchstone in the best tradition of British work.

The other painting which I have in front of me, that of 1948, is called *Vexilla Regis*.

It is a woodland scene, grey in tone, a sense of trees, bare but very much alive. They form a mysterious continuity of hill and dale blending and grouping with each other; presenting a large and varied expanse of nature. Thrusting straight up through the centre of the picture is one tree, its trunk tapering slightly to the spreading of its topmost branches, it stretches from Earth to Heaven. On its right hand side, set back a little, is another single tree, its two top branches reaching together, and settled in their foliage a great nest in which a pelican has pricked its breast to feed its young, emblem of the Eucharist. To the left is a pole pegged into the ground and holding the Roman Emperor's Eagle; beyond are many trees and here and there temples and shrines, fountains and streams, and, threading all, many horses swiftly moving to the mountains beyond. There is a sense of an almost primordial silence, an otherworldness breaking into our own familiar one. We can walk there but in a dream.

It would seem that this is Britain just after the Roman occupation, their riderless horses are making to liberty; the Emperor's standard still stands but has no life, Stonehenge lies unaltered in the distance; and what remains is the survival of Christianity, the shadow and the triumph of Calvary. The great tree, the standard of the King, Christ lifted up; the standard of the Emperor, paganism, the bad thief, dust, it almost is not there compared to the tree on the right whose sap is vital life, which will grow to the stature of the central tree, which in timelessness has so grown, the good thief to whom Jesus said "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise". Doves are descending, the Holy Ghost to the heart of Christ; the crown of thorns lies in the twisting of the briar at the foot of the tree; the Robin Redbreast there baptised.

This is but a whisper of all that might stand revealed as the appearance of a quite normal woodland scene breaks in upon us. A wood, a tree, these must inevitably evoke the Tree, the Tree of Life. Nothing in David Jones' visual world has life until it joins, is part of, IS, this transubstantial reality.

'KYNGE ARTHUR YS NAT DEDE'

Probably most people today have made their acquaintance with King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table through T. H. White's novels collected under the title of *The Once and Future King* or through Walt Disney's film *The Sword and the Stone* or the musical *Camelot*, both based on White's books. That the film at least may be regarded as more suitable for children than for adults is not without its point, for David Jones declares that one of the *Books for the Bairns* dealing with King Arthur's knights was the book he most liked hearing read as a child. That was some sixty-five years ago, but in the foreword he contributed to R. W. Barber's book *Arthur of Albion* (1961) he tells how a friend of his discovered her child in tears over 'a child's popular version of what is called in Malory, "the moste pyteous tale of the Morte Arthur Saunz Gwerdon"'. This brings us, so far as David Jones's use of the Matter of Britain is concerned, pretty well to the heart of the matter, as the English-speaking peoples, for better or for worse, derive the common basis of their knowledge of the Arthurian legend from the works of Sir Thomas Malory. Malory's version, finished in 1469 and first printed by Caxton in 1485, is such that Professor Eugène Vinaver, his latest editor, claims that 'he alone in any language could thus have poured into the modern mould the sentiment which the Middle Ages had created' (*Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages* [ALMA], ed. R. S. Loomis, p. 552). This compilation of eight romances, popularly known by the title of the last as the *Morte d'Arthur*, is the chief source of Arthurian reference for *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*, though the medieval Welsh romances of the *Mabinogion* run Malory a close second.

In his long essay entitled 'The Myth of Arthur', first written for the volume *For Hilaire Belloc* (1942) and revised for publication in *Epoch and Artist* (1959), David Jones has given the most coherent statement of his feeling for the Arthurian legends. The accounts of scholars are often necessarily matter-of-fact, classifying and noting points of origin and obscure philology, playing down questions of evaluation or poetic relevance, so David Jones's essay is a very real complement to their work in sketching the contemporary importance of the material. As he says, 'What

makes the Arthurian thing important to the Welsh is that there is no other tradition at all equally the common property of all the inhabitants of Britain (at all events of those south of the Antonine Wall), and the Welsh, however separatist by historical, racial and geographical accidents, are devoted to the unity of this island' (p. 216).

The second part of this essay contains a longish appraisal of Malory's art and technique, quoting a good number of passages, many of which are key motifs in *In Parenthesis*, *The Anathemata* and the extracts so far published from the work in progress. The first of these presents Balin and Balan, while the others are mainly concerned with Lancelot—the episode of the Chapel Perilous, the love that the Fair Maid of Astolat bore him, and his role in the final catastrophe, the *Morte* proper. The significance of these *momenta* in the poems (apart from the short extracts, space not permitting) will be discussed later; here we need merely note the qualities in Malory that are of general consequence to David Jones. He himself mentions the 'determination' and the 'unmistakable intention' he finds in Malory, 'this feeling of men doing things good or bad, "to the uttermost"'. Malory's understanding of chivalry is fundamentally martial, depending on deeds achieved to enhance the knight's prowess rather than on adventures undertaken in the service of a lady. It is more often concerned with the concrete details of battles and tournaments rather than with such ideals as might motivate the encounters. The loves of Lancelot and Tristram may occupy many of Malory's pages, but his stories are not primarily love-stories as the treatment of the love-theme in *The Book of Sir Tristram* amply shows. This aspect of Malory, the martial chivalry, makes reference to him peculiarly apt in *In Parenthesis*, which is in fact the most distinctly Malorian of David Jones's works. But the allusions are not confined to the common theme of martial endeavour: there is also the world of the supernatural, which is especially to the fore in Malory's account of the Sankgreal and such episodes as that of Lancelot's visit to the Chapel Perilous. The symbolism of the Holy Grail in Malory is adumbrated in the qualities that Galahad manifests in achieving the quest; it is an ideal of Christian asceticism and purity and represents the supreme adventure to the Arthurian circle. The Christian aspect, which is also apparent in some earlier versions of the Grail theme, is, however, combined by David Jones with the ritual archetype held to underlie it by Jessie Weston in her influential book *From Ritual to Romance*.

Malory was almost certainly unaware of any such archetypes in his work, being more concerned with the story, as most medieval secular writers were, but David Jones's work is especially devoted to the ordering of diverse phenomena, to the alignment of similars. Malory's world is composite and heterogeneous in accordance with its origins, though he tried to give it a kind of unity, as his reference to 'the hoole book of king Arthur' indicates. It thus forms a remarkable frame of reference for David Jones's attempts at ordering his world and experiences.

But in works which are not primarily Arthurian (except for *The Hunt* with its reworking of Arthur's pursuit of the boar Trwyth), what is the function of Arthurian motifs? The answer to this question varies, of course according to the nature of the work and also according to its position in the work, and this despite the fact that several of the motifs recur, both within one and the same work and in different ones. In appending notes to his poems David Jones shows the necessity for elucidating the references for those to whom Malory and the *Mabinogion* are not as familiar as they are to himself, but this in itself is scarcely sufficient for the impact of the reference to be properly felt. The reader who does not intimately know and, more importantly, feel in his bones the human relevance of these images will fail to appreciate their reverberations. Here is a challenge to wider reading.

In the brief preface to *In Parenthesis* Malory is specifically invoked and the tone of the work set by the comment that the landscape of battle spoke 'with a grimly voice' (Malory, vi, 15). This is also the first Arthurian allusion in the body of the work itself, occurring in the initial pages of Part 3, where the account begins to assume a more poetic form. The detailed factual description of the mustering of the soldiers, their unnoticed departure for France and their settling into camp behind the battle lines, given in Parts 1 and 2, now yields to 'Starlight Order'. The soldiers set out on a long night march into the trenches. They pass through a barrier, beyond which lights are prohibited, their sense of horror and fear growing, like Lancelot at the Chapel Perilous:

Past the little gate  
into the field of upturned defences,  
into the burial-yard—  
the grinning and the gnashing and the sore dreading—nor saw  
he any light in that place.

The fitness of this allusion need not be dwelt upon, but we should note that in the last moments of consciousness in the death scene at the end of Part 7 the same episode of the Chapel Perilous is invoked, where Lancelot insists on keeping the sword he took from the dead knight in order to heal a wounded knight, 'whether that I lyve other dye'.

Towards the end of the night sequence, in the watch, a 'corkscrew-picket-iron half submerged' evokes Arthur's sword Excalibur (i, 25 and xxi, 5). The sight of the sleeping men recalls the tradition of the dead monarch sleeping in the hills until such time as his country needs him again. This widespread tradition, here associated with the *fer sidhe* and Mac Og, also embraced Arthur and several other medieval monarchs. It is perhaps most memorably expressed in the epitaph attributed to Arthur at the end of the *Morte*: HIC IACET ARTHURUS, REX QUONDAM REXQUE FUTURUS. The allusion in 'Starlight Order' arises from the visual situation, but the sense of touch, the cold and the numbness take over as the allusion leads on to Arthur's expedition to the Otherworld to capture the magic cauldron which would not boil the food of a coward. This story is contained in the Welsh poem known as *The Spoils of Annwfn* in the *Book of Taliesin* and is one of the very earliest poems to deal with Arthur in any language. It is particularly instructive to note how the eeriness and uncertainty of this night sequence is intensified by the allusions to episodes of supernatural power and magic in the Arthurian tales.

Day follows night, and the allusions change accordingly. Part 4 bears the heading 'King Pellam's Launde'. We are here perhaps more in the realm of Jessie Weston than of King Arthur, for her book strongly colours David Jones's approach to the Grail theme. King Pellam is king of the Waste Land in Malory (xvii, 3):

'And hit was in the realme of Logris, and so befelle there grete pestilence, and grete harme to both reallmys; for there encresed nother corne, ne grasse, nother well-nye no fruyte, ne in the watir was founde no fyssh. Therefore men call hit—the londys of the two marchys—the Waste Londe, for that dolerous stroke.'

The 'dolerous stroke', referred to on many occasions by David Jones, is the thrust inflicted by Balin on King Pellam by 'a mervaylous spere strangely wrought' (ii, 15), the wound from which he could not be healed until Galahad came in the quest



of the Holy Grail. As a result of the stroke Pellam's castle fell down, killing most of its inhabitants, and the people of the three countries round about were destroyed. The Dolorous Stroke in this account occurs in an ordinarily motivated encounter, for Pellam is wounded by Balin in an attempt to avenge the death of his brother, Garlon, at Balin's hands, whereas many of the versions of the Grail story make the wound in some sense a punishment. In fact, Malory confuses the issue by giving two accounts, in the second of which the Maimed King is called Pelleaus and receives the wound 'thorow both thyghes' for his audacity in entering the ship of Faith and trying to take the sword which only the perfect knight might have (xvii, 5). This second version is not referred to by David Jones, who thinks of the Grail hero, the knight who heals the Maimed King, in terms of the Peredur of the *Mabinogion*. According to Jessie Weston the conclusion of the Waste Land theme is brought about by the successful quest of the Grail, and the healing of the king causes the 'freeing of the waters' whereby the land is fructified. Curiously enough, there is no mention of this idea either in Malory or in *Peredur*. The English author concentrates all his attention on the ideal of knighthood achieved by Galahad, the Maimed King retiring without further ado to 'a place of religion of whyght monkes' (xvii, 21) and nothing more said, while the Welsh romance contains no healing motif at all. David Jones, however, is clearly more interested in Jessie Weston's ritual archetype, and his composite references use the dual sources to evoke a conjectural form of the Grail story. The title of Part 4 sets the tone for the sequence, in which particular details are mentioned later in Dai's boastful catalogue: 'I was the spear in Balin's hand/that made waste King Pellam's land' (p. 79). The last few lines of the boast allude to the motif of the question which the Grail hero should have asked in order to release the Maimed King from his misery. This whole complex of ideas recurs in the disastrous encounter of Part 7 in the grim rhetorical question 'who gives a bugger for/the Dolorous Stroke'. But then comes a catalogue of heroes who in death 'fructify the land', among them the name of 'Peredur of steel arms'. The allusion here is not very exact, as the fructification of the land has to be understood in two different senses—with Peredur in the ritual sense of the Waste Land theme, with the other heroes by transference in the nobility of their deeds.

'King Pellam's Launde' begins with an anonymous reference to Lancelot, providing a connexion with the allusions to him



in the preceding section and making the transition from night to day: 'So thus he sorrowed till it was day and heard the foules sing, then somewhat he was comforted' (xiii, 19). This quotation is peculiarly apt, as it shows us the Lancelot who by virtue of his sin and wickedness is unable to achieve the quest of the Holy Grail. A further moment of crisis in Lancelot's career is spotlighted in the wood sequence (p. 66), where his madness is alluded to. This episode occurs in Malory (xi, 8) where Lancelot has been deceived into sleeping with Elaine, being under the impression that she was Guinevere. In his sleep he talks so loudly of his love for Guinevere that the queen in her nearby chamber hears him, coughs loud and wakes him up. Lancelot immediately recognizes Guinevere's cough, realizes that he has been with Elaine and reacts to the queen's accusations by fainting and then leaping out of a bay-window into the garden and then 'he knew nat whothir, and was as wylde woode as ever was man.' The lively details of this episode make it one of the most memorable in Malory. Elaine, for example, tells Sir Bors, 'And whan he awoke he toke hys swerd in hys honde, naked save hys shurte, and lepe oute at a wyndow wyth the greselyest grone that ever I harde man make.' The reference in *In Parenthesis* requires perhaps a subtle mind to remember that Galahad, Malory's successful Grail quester, is the fruit of Lancelot's bewitched union with Elaine, so that this is yet another ramification of the Waste Land theme.

In the list of John Ball's companions appears that of Dai de la Cote male taile. The allusion to Malory's Knight of the Evyll-Shapyn Cote (ix, 1) is most probably a purely visual one. Dai's glory in the book is the long boast asserting the identity of human action throughout the ages of man's history, behind which stands Christ's assertion 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am' (*John* viii, 58). The catalogue is modelled on the boast of Taliesin at the court of Maelgwn in the *Hanes Taliesin* and recalls also the Anglo-Saxon poem *Widsith*. (Interestingly enough, the same point of departure has been taken by Vernon Watkins in his poem *Taliesin and the Mockers* from the collection *Affinities* [1962].) Dai's boast is full of Arthurian matter, of which the Waste Land motifs have already been mentioned. Even the allusion to 'Abel when his brother found him, / under the green tree' is Malorian (xvii, 5) and not exclusively Biblical as one might expect. The reference to Longinus, the legendary soldier who pierced Christ's side with a lance, also has a place in Malory, as his lance is identified with the spear

associated with the Grail (ii, 16). 'The adder in the little bush' is the unsuspected catalyst of the final battle in the *Morte* (xxi, 4), since the drawing of a sword is the sign for the opposing sides to slay each other, and a knight first drew his sword to kill the adder that stung his foot. 'And never syns was there never seyne a more dolefuller batayle in no Crysten londe.' There then follows the list of Arthur's twelve victorious battles against the Saxons, as given by Nennius in his *Historia Brittonum*. Arthur is referred to by many native titles as the Bear of the Island, the Island Dragon, the Bull of Battle, the War Duke, the Director of Toil. But despite Arthur's glorification as defender of Britain in the Welsh and early historical sources, he himself brought about his downfall through his hubristic assumption of the defensive role of supernatural forces in the shape of the head of Brân the Blessed, buried under the Tower of London. Arthur's action here was 'the third woeful uncovering' alluded to in the Welsh Triads (see Rachel Bromwich in *ALMA*, pp. 45 ff.). Again the final tragedy of the *Morte* is referred to in the person of Agravaine, who first openly counselled that action should be taken against Lancelot for the disgrace that his liaison with Guinevere brought on Arthur and the Round Table. All these Arthurian allusions emphasize types of encounter either in or leading to battle.

The only other Arthurian allusion of Part 4 is a Welsh one of considerable force in David Jones's imagination—it is the boar Trwyth, which was the object of Arthur's great expedition undertaken to help Culhwch in winning the hand of Olwen, daughter of the giant Ysbaddaden. This episode from *Culhwch and Olwen* echoes through the rest of *In Parenthesis* and is of such compelling power as to form the main subject of one of David Jones's most recently published pieces, *The Hunt*. In this extraordinary chase the role of Menw was to transform himself into a bird to snatch one of Twrch Trwyth's treasures, the comb and shears hidden between his ears, but he failed in his task and was poisoned into the bargain. Llaesgeven appears in *Culhwch* as Llaesgymyn, a name which means 'slack hewer'. Between them, he and Menw represent something of the extremes of disparity between effort and reward, characteristic enough of life as of battle.

Part 5, 'Squat Garlands for White Knights', with its more leisurely account of day-to-day activities outside the immediate range of battle, has only one Arthurian sidelight. The cook is compared with 'the worshipful Beaumains/the turner of broches [i.e. spits]/ the brothwallah' (p. 119), i.e. to Sir Gareth of Orkney,

Gawain's brother, who worked himself up from the humblest beginnings in Arthur's court to being a knight of the Round Table (the particular reference is to vii, 2 and 5).

Everywhere in Malory the pavilions of the title to Part 6 abound as tournaments and preparations for battle take place. The initial lines of this sequence of preparations are typical Malorian phrases culled from disparate sources. The arrival of Elias the Captain (x, 29) marks the call to battle that he, 'a passynge good knyght' (x, 30), made to Mark and Tristram. His is a brief role in the lengthy *Book of Sir Tristram*, but one of great dignity. In the rest of this section, which has once again the more naturalistically descriptive prose of Parts 1 and 2, the attitude of the soldiers is cast in the linguistic framework of that of Arthur's party in the *Morte* (xx, 1). There is no allusion to any particular knight in this section apart from Elias, who represents the enemy. It is an evocation of mood, not of event or character.

The precise prose of 'Pavilions and Captains of Hundreds' yields to a greater allusiveness in 'The Five Unmistakable Marks'. This final section provides a summation of most of the Arthurian references already made. Thus, the death of Aneirin Lewis, 'who sleeps in Arthur's lap', brings references to Olwen, Ysbaddaden and Twrch Trwyth. The battle, naturally enough, is aligned with that between Arthur and Mordred (xxi, 3) at Salisbury, where Malory situated the fatal battle of Camlann of the *Annales Cambriae*. The whole atmosphere reeks of death. We are told, as was Galahad, how the green tree under which Abel was killed 'bore scarlet memorial'. The Dolorous Stroke is invoked only to be immediately dismissed as irrelevant in the extremity of the circumstances. Lancelot's dread experience of the Chapel Perilous is recalled. The names of the great heroes are read before us—Tristram, Lamorak de Galis, Alisand de Orphelin, Beaumains, Balin and Balan the unwitting fratricides, and Peredur—and that knight is mentioned who, at the moment of death, ate grass as a token of the sacrament (David Jones couldn't track down this Malorian reference, nor have I been able to). The action of the enemy is compared with the truncheon of Garlon, the invisible knight (ii, 12 ff.), and the mention of the 'ferocious pursuer/terribly questing' reminds one of the Questing Beast that crops up in several places in Malory as the special pursuit of Sir Palomides. The conduct of battle resembles that of Mark and Tristram against the Saxons (x, 29), while the picture of death in the trenches is reminiscent of Mordred's

siege of Guinevere in the White Tower (xxi, 1). The words 'and but we avoid wisely there is but death', which David Jones attributes to Mark, I have not been able to trace, but their context is not especially important—it is rather the plain words that matter.

Such, then, are the Arthurian *momenta* of *In Parenthesis*. The sources and types of allusion are as varied as their effects. But perhaps they can be summed up in two ways—as particularizing the events, characters and moods of the war experience, and as providing a recognized and valued tradition of experience in battle against which to see the *dissecta membra* of the soldier's life. The dislocation of warfare in the trenches especially gains some kind of relevance and meaning through the reference, in this case, to the Matter of Britain. It is a standard which gives a certain objective, as opposed to emotional or sentimental, value to the soldier's otherwise meaninglessly amputated existence.

*The Anathemata* is a more difficult work to define than *In Parenthesis*. Its theme is more abstract, being concerned almost more with a mode of seeing than with what is actually seen, and although its descriptions of particulars are as precise and finely wrought as those of *In Parenthesis*, they are given not simply for themselves, but as aspects of the archetypes of history (whether factual or imagined) and human experience. In this more ambitious framework the Arthurian allusions have a somewhat different significance from those of the earlier work. Many of them take up materials already used in *In Parenthesis*, though in a context which is more deeply concerned with the essence of things, the coherence of observed phenomena, and perhaps especially of religious phenomena, where the data of anthropological investigation into ancient and primitive rituals, for example, are seen as part of the same fabric as the revealed wisdom of Christianity.

The anthropological substructure is immediately apparent in the first section, 'Rite and Fore-time', with the 'cult-man [who] stands alone in Pellam's land'. The reference here, more than in *In Parenthesis*, is to the fertility ritual associated with the Grail story, and Pellam's name merely serves to invoke this idea. But in the later references to this theme the anthropological motif is linked to the idea of Christ as both Redeemer and the Maimed King. This is lightly sketched in the query 'at any hour the maimed king/pays a call?' in the section 'Keel, Ram, Stauros' (p. 179), to be amplified in 'Mabinog's

Liturgy' and 'Sherthursdaye and Venus-Day', for among the titles applied to Christ are those of 'Freer of the Waters' and 'Chief Physician' associated with Peredur (pp. 207, 225). In a similar constellation of ideas the parable of the Sower (*Matt.* xiii, *Mark* iv, *Luke* viii) is joined to the theme: 'The chthonic old Sower restores the Wastelands' (p. 213). The Grail theme is further alluded to in the use of the unusual term 'Sherthursdaye', for this is the word used by Caxton (and regarded by Vinaver as corrupt, as it is not found in the Winchester MS. of Malory's works) when Christ appears out of the Holy Grail and tells Galahad that it is 'the holy dysshe wherein I ete the lambe on sherthursdaye' (xvii, 20). This name for Maundy Thursday is now generally obsolete in English, but it is still used in Scandinavia (cf. Norw. *skjaertorsdag*), the first element being cognate with Eng. 'sheer', i.e. pure or bright.

The context of ritual includes reference to the hill-places on which ancient ceremonies and sacrifices so frequently took place. Here we are reminded of the *colles Arthuri* (p. 55) and the tradition of the sleeping king; and the later reference to 'dragons and old Pendragons' (p. 68) with their abodes in such areas as the Snowdon range also evokes Arthur's father, Uther Pendragon, from whom Malory's tales take their beginning. The delving into prehistory and the search for origins in this section of the poem relate the archaeological evidence of potsherds and dog-bones to 'the dish/that holds no coward's food' of *The Spoils of Annwfn* and the dogs 'that quested the hog' in *Culhwch and Olwen* (p. 79). Both these exploits of Arthur are, as we have seen, adventures into the unknown world of the supernatural.

'Middle-Sea and Lear-Sea' is concerned with the definition of time and a change of place from the Mediterranean to Britain, expressed in imagery of the sea. The period of the Crucifixion is determined by a number of events, including the making of the sixth century B.C. 'Beautiful Kore', and in the list of paragons of female beauty hereby evoked there figures Gwenhwyfar, the name of Arthur's wife in Welsh tradition, the Guinevere of Malory. Later, in the sequence devoted to the Blessed Virgin in 'Mabinog's Liturgy', Gwenhwyfar is again recalled, though this time to suffer, even at her best, by a comparison with Mary (p. 195). In the progress from the Mediterranean to Britain Cornwall is the first part of the land to be reached, and it is singularly fortunate that Cornwall should play such a distinctive role in the Arthurian myth. Mark is an

ignominious figure in Malory, but when the Scillies are hailed as 'the horse-king's *insulae*' (p. 97)—Welsh *march* means 'horse'—and reference is made to the kingdom of Lyonesse as 'Mark's lost hundred' (p. 101), it is, the incorporation of these regions into the mythological setting that matters and not especially the associations of Mark. The mention of Igraine, the wife of the Duke of Cornwall who by magic became Arthur's mother, is more significant, in the same way as that of Uther Pendragon. This Cornish sequence has another peculiarly felicitous coalescence of ideas in 'Morgana's faylight', since the original *fata morgana*, referring to a mirage in the Straits of Messina, is accommodated 'twixt Uxantis and the Horn' and assimilated into the character of Morgan le Fay, Arthur's sister, whose supernatural powers shimmer through much of Malory's story.

The title of the section 'The Lady of the Pool' sets up a number of intricate associations, for Arthurian legend knows of both a Lady of the Lake and a Lady of the Fountain. The Lady of the Lake, otherwise known as Nyneve, is the mysterious figure who gives Arthur the sword he sees raised above the water of the lake by an arm clothed in white samite. She even gains power over Merlin (p. 159), whose infatuation with her is such that she can imprison him under a great stone (Malory, iv, 1). In the supernatural world she, together with Morgan le Fay, who is also connected with the Lady of the Pool, is Merlin's female counterpart and 'allwayes fryndely to kynge Arthure' (ix, 16). The Lady of the Fountain, in the tale from the *Mabinogion*, is not specifically referred to in this section, but appears in the final one expressly as 'the lady of the *ffynnon*' (p. 237) in the Passion sequence. In the medieval romance she marries Owain in order to secure a proper protection for the fountain, and here, as in the Passion sequence, the theme of salvation is paramount.

On the whole, however, 'The Lady of the Pool' is an evocation of the long history of London, antedating Arthur by recalling Belin (pp. 124, 163), whose imperial dignity Arthur discovered in searching through the chronicles of the land (Malory, v, 1). Belinus occupies an important position in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (iii, 1-10), the most important source of the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, which in its turn was the chief source of Malory's version. From such glimpses into the mist of early times the Lady of the Pool provides us with a plethora of data and associations, swearing to them by a hotch-potch of authorities abounding



with Arthurian significance. But the Lady of the Pool has only a limited place for Arthurian reminiscences, and when she has managed to include the '*rexque futurus*' (p. 164), she goes on to other things. There is plenty more Celtic material, to be sure, but what is specifically Arthurian is here almost submerged beneath the rushing waters of memory.

In 'Mabinog's Liturgy', which is basically concerned with the celebration of the birth of Christ, Guinevere appears in a position analogous to that of the Blessed Virgin as we have already noted. Arthur is mentioned by his titles of Bear of the Island and Director of Toil (pp. 196 f.), but more by virtue of being her husband than for his own sake. Guinevere's death in the *Morte* (xxi, 11), one of Malory's most poignant episodes and one in which the liturgy plays an impressive part, is referred to for the fine cloth of her shroud. The *Morte* is further alluded to in Mordred's incestuous compulsion to take Guinevere as his wife, which she resists by retiring into the Tower of London (xxi, 1), the allusion again seeking to underline the purity of the archetypal Mother. Even the Welsh tradition that Arthur had three successive wives all named Gwenhwyfar (or Guinevere or Gaynor), an idea invoked by the Lady of the Pool, takes its place among the associations chosen to enhance her position.

Such other Arthurian motifs as there are in the section tend to deepen the numinous atmosphere appropriate to the celebration of a liturgy. In this sense Merlin is mentioned (p. 201); and the 'nine crones of Glevum', the witches of Caer Loyw (Gloucester) that are killed by Arthur and his men at the end of *Peredur*, are thought of as active on the night of the Nativity. It is hard here, as indeed elsewhere, to draw the line between clearly Arthurian allusions and the more generally Celtic mood, since the two are in any case mingled in the deposits of literature and tradition, as they are in David Jones's imagination.

The culmination of liturgy and ritual, connecting the beginning and the end of *The Anathemata*, is expressed in the final section, 'Sherthursdaye and Venus-Day', to which the coherence of a number of images has already led us. Only one new allusion remains to be mentioned, and this links up with the Grail theme that runs through the whole work. In the concluding lines the definition of place in the Last Supper sequence fixes on 'Sarras city', where 'in the spirituall palleyes' Galahad learns the mysteries of the Holy Grail (xvii, 20). In



Malory's conception of the Arthurian legends the quest of the Sankgreall is the achievement solely of the perfect knight. Need more be said?

The types of Arthurian reference in *The Anathemata* certainly differ from those of *In Parenthesis*. Though some of the motifs recur in both works, they are used in such a way as to reinforce the differing themes of the two books. The scope of *The Anathemata* is wider than that of *In Parenthesis*, not being controlled by a clear-cut linear narrative. Accordingly, its Arthurian allusions deal more with those aspects of the Matter of Britain that border on the realms of the supernatural and the numinous. Neither Merlin nor Morgan le Fay is mentioned in *In Parenthesis*. But the mysterious relationships backwards and forwards through time and place are perhaps best captured in the Fool's words from *King Lear* (iii, 2), which serve as an epigraph to the whole book: 'This prophetic Merlin shall make for I live before his time.'

The Arthurian myth is only one of David Jones's circles of images, perhaps not even the most important. But he uses it systematically to explore the depths of his chosen themes. It is not there to provide a mere literary background or a pseudo-medieval flavour, but because it is a way of stating his conviction of the essential unity of the Island of Britain.

A NOTE ON DAVID JONES

In this short piece, I can do no more than note some characteristics of the work of David Jones. It is not likely that he will ever be a popular poet, but that his work will live and be an inspiration to people and poets, in the future, I am convinced. For many people, he can be lightly dismissed as an irrelevant, eccentric antiquarian. For those who are prepared to spend time in the company of his two major works, *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*, their reward is sure.

In many ways he resembles James Joyce, in his complexity and his rare beauty. For many years we have exchanged notes on the Irishman's puzzling, but rewarding poem *Finnegans Wake*. They are both similar in the synthesising quality of their art. "Joyce Fawr", as he once called him, despite his apostasy, never succeeded in throwing off the yoke of the church he rejected, and it is interesting to note with what awe he speaks of the sacraments, especially the Sacrament of the Body and Blood. Indeed, it is not frivolous to suggest that Joyce out-priests the priest in his terrifying awe before the mystery of the sacrament, and it is not hard to discern the effects of this attitude throughout the whole of his work. It is not without significance that his great work *Ulysses* opens with a blasphemous caricature of the Mass.

Unlike Joyce, the conditioning act in David Jones' life came, not with rejection, but with submission to the Roman Catholic church, in 1921. From his works, it is clear that this was not a purely 'spiritual' experience, but a conversion of the whole man. No modern artist gives such a powerful impression of wholeness, as David Jones. This means the thorough acceptance of the physical universe, redeemed by God, through the Incarnation of His Son, "born of the Virgin Mary". This, in turn, means the acceptance of the sacramental principle, which means the transformation of matter into means of grace for people—the creatures of God. It is in the light of this belief that he sees the forming and re-forming of the history of this Island. It is the core of his life as an artist. It is the key to the whole of his work, as a poet and as a painter.

If I may carry on my comparison with Joyce; David Jones' work, in words, is an auditory experience. His works are made (he is, in his own words, 'a maker') to be heard, and a large part of the sense and beauty of his poetry will be lost unless it is

spoken aloud. In a letter, he once told me: "I had a further bout of reading *Finnegans Wake* a little back. As you say, in one of your letters, it is of endless fascination and *always* repays further struggle with its meaning. I think the certitude that every fraction of it, no matter how incredibly involved it may [be], *has* a positive and exacting meaning; that nothing, not a jot or tittle, is "accidental", is a powerful incentive towards trying again to wrestle with it. When, after long struggle, some bit is illumined for one it is always hugely rewarding and often superbly funny as well. I still find the Anna Livia section by far the most beautiful and most moving . . . ." This could have been written about his own *Anathemata*, and the poems which have come from his pen since the publishing of this work.

Then again, there is another similarity with Joyce, namely, the complexity of his art. They both remind us of the ravishing intricacy of Celtic art. For David Jones a work of art, be it a poem, a picture or a sculpture, is an attempt to comprehend within the totality of the work "that which the whole world cannot comprehend or hold". It is in the light of the struggle to attain this totality that we should view the complex nature of his art. In a letter, he once told me that the artist's best text or motto is found in psalm cxxii, verse 3 in the Book of Common Prayer, or psalm cxxi in the Vulgate. In the latter, it reads: "Jerusalem which is built as a city, which is compact together". Or in the Book of Common Prayer: "Jerusalem is built as a city: that is at unity in itself". The Welsh version, perhaps, brings out David Jones' reading of the text more clearly still: "Jerusalem â adeiladwyd fel dinas wedi ei chyd-gysylltu ynddi ei hun." "*Cyd-gysylltu*"—"inter-joining". It is a matter of joinery!—by analogy, similar to the work of the "*seiri cerdd*", the "*carpenters of song*", the joiners of parts who make of them a whole, a totality which comprehends within it the universal. It is worth noting, I think, that this is perhaps the aspect of art (I speak of the Celtic complexities) which is missing in Welsh modern writing in English, showing a break with tradition. Dylan Thomas is an exception; he has, in some mysterious way, captured the spirit of the Welsh metaphysicals and '*seiri cerdd*' of the Welsh poetic tradition to a degree which is remarkable when we remember his background.

The parts comprehended in the whole in David Jones' are, those things "received", those things, which he as an artist hands on to future generations. These parts can at best be no more than fragments of the history of man, living in a particular place; and for David Jones this means Britain. His work, therefore,

is a recalling of these things, an *anamnesis*, *anathemata*. In his own words: "More recently in making *The Anathemata*, I was explicitly concerned with a re-calling of certain things which I myself had received, things which are part of the complex deposits of this island, so of course, involving Wales and of course, involving the central Christian rite and mythological, historical, etc. data of all sorts."

"Data of all sorts"; here is another clue to the understanding of his art, and another resemblance between him and Joyce. Recently, I visited David Jones and saw a finished drawing in colours which has as its theme the legend of Tristan and Iseult. The tragic pair are seen on board a ship which is depicted in magnificent detail. To complete this work, David Jones was first of all involved in painful (or was it?) research into the business of ship-building, so that the data could be comprehended in the whole. Once these data were collected, then, I think, began the synthesising task of the artist "joiner". There is a glorious materialism in the work of David Jones, a materialism which matches, or perhaps derives from the materialism of the Incarnation itself. His work is sacramental.

One afternoon in the autumn of 1956, I remember sitting in his bed-sitting room *cum* studio in Harrow-on-the-Hill, listening to him reading one of his newly finished poems, *The Tutelar of the Place*. My eyes wandered to the walls of the room and his magnificently delicate drawings and paintings; the fire-place, or as he would have it, the *pentan* from Eric Gill's home at Capel-y-ffin; lettering of words drawn, oh so patiently, from the ancient works of some Welsh carpenter of song; a framed miracle of flowers in a fragile glass calix; Welsh Grammars, books of ancient Welsh and Anglo-Saxon poetry, histories, and so on, and so on,—and somehow or other, the poetry which issued forth from the poet's mouth was all of a piece with these things, for they were all *anathemata*, the commemoration, the *anamnesis*, or the recalling of that which was received.

I have mentioned at the beginning that some would regard David Jones as irrelevant in these atomic, planned, megalopolitan days. How wrong they are!

Queen of the differentiated sites, administratrix of the demarcations, let our cry come unto you.

In all times of imperium save us when the  
*mercatores* come save us  
from the guile of the *negotiatores* save us

from the *missi*, from the agents  
who think no shame  
by inquest to audit what is shameful to tell  
deliver us . . . .

When the technicians manipulate the dead limbs of our  
culture as though it yet had life, have mercy on us.  
Open unto us, let us enter a second time within your  
stola-folds in those days—ventricle and refuge both,  
*hendref* for world-winter, asylum from world-storm.  
Womb of the Lamb the spoiler of the Ram.

If that is an irrelevancy in these evil days, then there is little  
hope for us to be saved.

I have left no space to speak of his *In Parenthesis*, the epic  
poem of the First World War, which won for the author the  
Hawthornden Prize. Nowhere in modern literature can there  
be seen so clearly the two strands of the tradition of this Island,  
Welsh and English. We see the Welshman and Englishman yoked  
to the machines of war, showing forth from the depths of their  
being, sometimes unconsciously, the traditions that bind them  
into separate peoples. The experience of war was one which  
fired his imagination and made him conscious of the presence of  
these two traditions in his own person. Arthur and Alfred sit,  
together, on the throne of his heart. I remember him doing an  
autobiographical talk for the Welsh Home Service some years  
ago. He began: "About 800 years ago, a prince of Aberffraw  
defeated his Welsh and English enemies at Coleshill between  
Flint Sands and Halkin Mountain." This was an important fact  
for him, because, he said, Holywell where his father was born,  
is about three miles north-west of the battle site. And without  
that victory he would not have been speaking that night on the  
Welsh B.B.C., "as an artist of Welsh affinities". History is not  
something in the past, it is the past living in the present.

In a preface to the catalogue of The Arts Council of Great  
Britain's exhibition of David Jones' paintings, drawings and en-  
gravings, Saunders Lewis has said: "It is a grief for David Jones  
that he has no Welsh. He reads what he can get of competent  
English translation of early Welsh verse and prose . . . He feeds  
his meditation and his imagination on the Welsh past; it is a  
key to his work as English poet and painter".

David Jones' works should be required reading for every self-  
respecting Welsh writer, for it might lead him back to the wells of  
our tradition, and help to re-vivify the waste-land that is Wales.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**René Hague:** Anglo-Irish; a slightly younger contemporary of David Jones; was for many years a printer. He has been an occasional contributor to the Third Programme, of talks and features many of the latter being versions of, or based on, Old French poetry.

**Stuart Piggott:** Abercromby Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology, University of Edinburgh since 1946; travelled in Europe and Asia; recent books include *Ancient Europe: From the Beginnings of Agriculture to Classical Antiquity*.

**Peter Levi's** most recent collection of poems, *Fresh Water, Sea Water* (Black Raven Press, 21/-) has an Inscription by David Jones, to whom the book is dedicated, very beautifully reproduced on the cover.

**Saunders Lewis:** normally writes only in Welsh; verse, plays, etc.

**Nancy Sandars:** trained in archaeology at London and Oxford; has written on Bronze Age France and the Aegean; did an English version of the ancient Epic of Gilgamesh (Penguin Classics) and a study of Prehistoric Art in Europe (Pelican History of Art, forthcoming) and is now working on further translations.

**Sir Kenneth Clark's** most recent book, *Rembrandt and the Italian Renaissance* was published in this country and the United States last year. He has also recently edited an Anthology of Ruskin entitled *Ruskin Today*.

**David Blamires:** Lecturer in German, Manchester University; author of *Characterization and Individuality in Wolfram's 'Parzival'* (Cambridge University Press, 1966).

**Michael Alexander's** translations from the Anglo-Saxon, *The Earliest English Poems* (Penguin) was reviewed in the last issue of *Agenda*.

**Louis Bonnerot, F.R.S.L.,** Professeur à la Sorbonne.

**Tony Stoneburner:** Assistant Professor of English, Denison University, U.S.A.

**Nicolette Gray:** author of *Nineteenth Century Types and Title Pages; Dante, Rosetti and Ourselves* and *Lettering on Buildings*. Designer of Lettering.

**H.S. Ede:** Honorary Curator Kettles Yard, University of Cambridge; was for fifteen years Assistant at the Tate Gallery. He is the author of *Florentine Drawings of the Quattro Cento*, and *Savage Messiah; The Life of H. Gaudier Brzeska*.

**Aneirin Talfan Davies:** Head of Programmes, Wales of the B.B.C.; author and critic. Recently published: *Dylan: Druid of the Broken Body* (Dent).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"The Wall" first appeared in *Poetry* LXXXVII, No. 2 (November 1955).  
"The Dream of Private Clitus" in *Art and Literature* No. 1 (March 1964).  
"The Tutelar of the Place" in *Poetry* XCVII No. 4 (January 1961). René Hague's "David Jones: A Reconnaissance" in *The Twentieth Century* Vol. 168, No. 1001 (July 1960). David Blamires' "The Ordered World" is a revised version of an article that first appeared in *A Review of English Literature* Vol. VII No. 2 (April 1966). Aneurin Talfan Davies' "Note" was first published by *Poetry Wales* (Spring 1966). Nicolette Gray's "David Jones and the Art of Lettering" is an adapted version of an article that originally appeared in *Motif* No. 7.

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